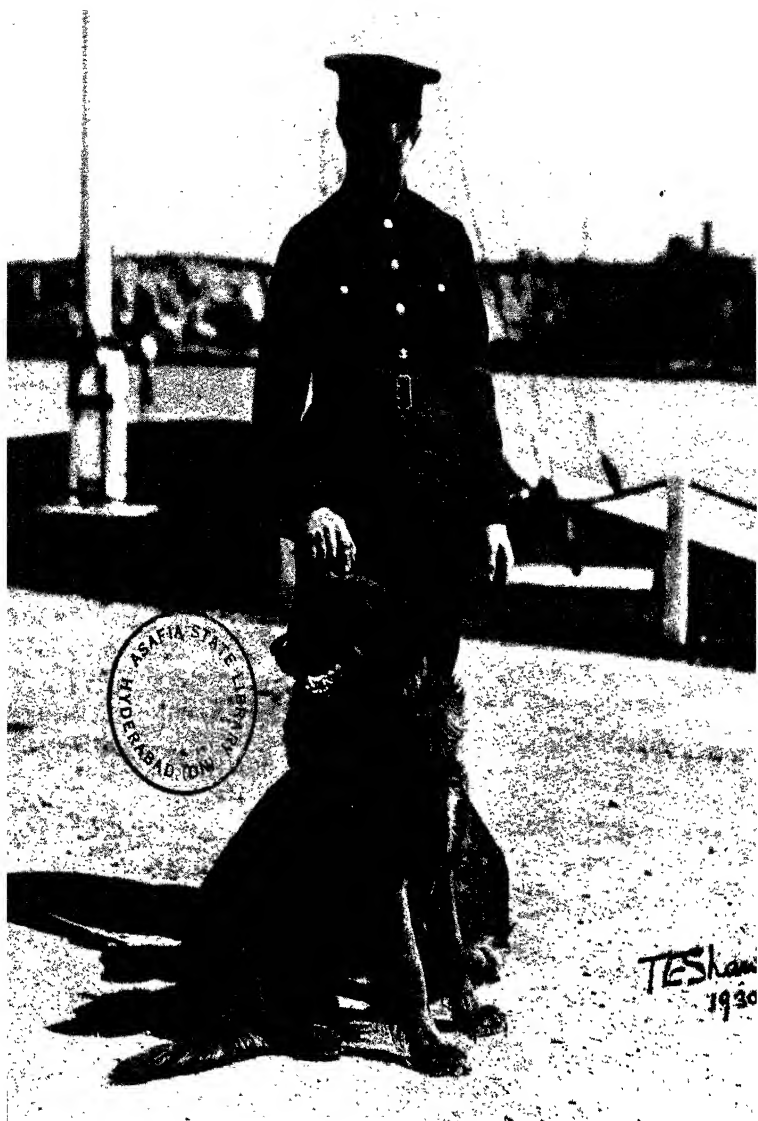




## THE GOLDEN REIGN







TESham  
1930

T. E. S. WITH THE DOGS

# THE GOLDEN REIGN

THE STORY OF MY FRIENDSHIP WITH  
"LAWRENCE OF ARABIA"

by  
CLARE SYDNEY SMITH

*With 25 half-tone Illustrations*



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# FOREWORD

*by*

MRS. S. LAWRENCE

(MOTHER OF COLONEL T. E. LAWRENCE)

SINCE the last war much has been written about my son Ned, but no really clear and intimate picture of his life and work in the Royal Air Force has been presented. This book fills the gap, and no one else but Mrs. Sydney Smith could have given such a delightful and detailed account of this period of his life.

“The Golden Reign” was his own name for the happy time he spent at the R.A.F. Flying-Boat Station, Mount Batten, under the command of the author’s husband. That it was a time of complete contentment can be appreciated by the many letters he wrote while he was there, some of which are contained in the book.

Ned was on terms of great friendship with the Sydney Smiths and spent much of his leisure hours with them, sharing their home-life and family doings, listening to music in their house, amusingly christened by him “The Fisherman’s Arms,” or taking the author with him when he explored

## FOREWORD

the beautiful rivers round Plymouth in his speed-boat.

Apart from his spare time he found in his work as personal clerk, and even more in his designing and improving of speed-boats, a new interest and outlet for his inventive capabilities under a Commanding Officer who was determined not to let his energies and talents go to waste. This led to a perfect combination and partnership of the two men which was, I know, extremely precious to Ned.

Those years at Mount Batten went past all too quickly and the "dissolution of partnership" (again Ned's term) was a sad moment for all three of them. But their friendship remained as strong to the end.

S. LAWRENCE.

31st October, 1939.

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

T. E. S. WITH THE DOGS . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MYSELF . . . . .	<i>facing page 14</i>
THE MARTELLO TOWER . . . . .	15
MOUNT BATTEN FROM THE AIR . . . .	15
T. E. S. DISEMBARKING FROM THE <i>RAJPUTANA</i>	32
T. E. S. . . . .	33
T. E. S. IN "SCRUFF ORDER" . . . .	33
ON BOARD H.M.S. <i>NORFOLK</i> . . . . .	66
GROUP ON BOARD H.M.S. <i>NORFOLK</i> . .	66
AFTER A RUN IN THE <i>BISCUIT</i> . . . .	67
MOUNT EDGCUMBE . . . . .	67
BARNWELL CASTLE . . . . .	110
FLETE . . . . .	110
T. E. S. WITH VISCOUNTESS CANTELUPE .	111
PICNIC AT PICKLECOMBE . . . . .	111
T. E. S. AND SYDNEY AT THURLESTONE .	118
THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS . . . . .	118
IN THE <i>BISCUIT</i> . . . . .	119
SETTING OUT IN THE <i>BISCUIT</i> . . . .	136
READY FOR A PICNIC . . . . .	136
THE FIRST 200 CLASS POWER-BOAT . .	137
THE WRECKED SEAPLANE . . . . .	137
PAINTING OF T. E. S. BY H. S. TUKE, R.A.	172
MODEL OF THE <i>GOLDEN HIND</i> . . . . .	172
T. E. LAWRENCE . . . . .	173



EARLY in 1920 I went out to Egypt where my husband was in command of the Royal Air Force Station at Heliopolis.

The Cairo Conference was held in the spring of 1921 and there was, of course, much coming and going of important people. The Conference had been summoned by Mr. Winston Churchill, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the purpose of attempting to settle the Arab question. Sir Hugh (now Lord) Trenchard, Sir Geoffrey Salmond, Miss Gertrude Bell and other famous authorities on the Near East took part in the proceedings, during which the Emir Feisal was offered the throne of the new semi-independent Arab State of Iraq, and his brother, Abdulla, that of Transjordan.

During the Conference we did our share of entertaining in our Cairo flat and I was used to my husband bringing people in with him at odd hours of the day. So there seemed nothing out of the ordinary when one hot March afternoon he came in as usual at tea-time accompanied by a small and, I thought, not particularly distinguished-looking man in a blue suit, carrying a white topee.

My sister-in-law, Patty Edelston, and I were sit-

ting together talking, and when Sydney introduced our visitor in typical English fashion we neither of us caught his name. I remember he was quiet and withdrawn and had a shock of untidy-looking fair hair, but beyond that he made no impression on me at all.

After tea Sydney drove him home, and when he came back he said, "Did you realize who that was?"

"No."

"It was Lawrence of Arabia!"

"Good gracious!"

"And what's more, he's asked us to go to tea with him to-morrow."

That was our first meeting.

The next day we made our way to the famous Groppi's Restaurant in Cairo where we had arranged to meet. Now that I knew who he was, I was looking forward to getting to know our visitor better, but it was not until long afterwards that I realized what an unusual event—almost unknown, in fact—it was for him to invite anyone to tea. Usually he shunned all social occasions, even the simplest, and never took the initiative in arranging them.

We arrived first and sat at a table in the garden facing the room he would have to come through to join us. I remember so well just how he walked into the tea-gardens.

There was a stir of interest when he appeared as everybody knew him by sight, but he took no notice as he walked straight across to us in the peculiarly springy walk he had. A quiet dignity

surrounded his small, modest figure, dressed as yesterday in a dark blue suit and holding his white topee with both hands in front of him—a dignity which put the bare-faced curiosity of the public to shame.

Direct as usual he came straight to our table and sat down. I noticed what a beautiful voice he had, an Irish voice, low and soft-pedalled. I discovered afterwards that voices meant a great deal to him and that he couldn't stand loud, rasping ones, holding that voices are a sure indication of personality. He also disliked loud noises intensely and was sensitive to the slightest variation in tone of his gramophone or its needles.

The conversation was largely between him and Sydney and on technical matters. He was extremely interested in flying, and expressed the opinion that it would be the most important development of the future. They discussed the project of an air route across the desert which was later put into effect ; Lawrence greatly helping on its success by talking to his Arab friends about it and winning their co-operation. But though I did not join in very much I never once felt excluded. Lawrence looked at me as he talked and half-addressed his remarks to me. Later I found this was a habit of his. He would not let anyone he liked feel out of it, even though the conversation did not really concern them.

He was then only thirty-two years old, but already he had made new history in the Near East and was famous. He took a prominent part in the Con-

ference and on the request of Mr. Churchill temporarily acted as official adviser on Arab affairs for the Colonial Office. But our accepting him, not as a personage but as a human being, made direct contact possible and laid the foundation for a friendship based on simple love and understanding, which he himself called "The Golden Reign." This was not to be for several years, however, and it never occurred to me then that these two short meetings would turn out to be of any particular interest or importance in my life.

One evening during the Conference Sydney gave an official dinner at the R.A.F. Mess at Heliopolis in honour of the Secretary of State. Mr. Churchill, of course, had the seat of honour and "Colonel Lawrence" was to sit opposite him. However, when the time came to sit down to dinner there was no Colonel Lawrence, and he never turned up at all. Long afterwards, he confessed to me that he had a horror of such official functions. Not only did he hate to be in the full limelight, but he felt that public dinners were a waste of time and totally unnecessary to the business of doing a job well. As he neither smoked nor drank this aversion to long dinners is all the more understandable, and no one ever bore him a grudge for such lapses from conventional behaviour.

Soon after our two meetings he left Cairo on an official mission to King Hussein at Jidda and on to Transjordan, seeing many of his old Arab friends.

He and I did not meet again for five years.

## II

WHAT happened during those five years? They were unhappy ones for Lawrence. He was disappointed and disillusioned over the way his Arabs were being used for political ends, and refused to help carry through a policy which in his heart he disapproved.

During the time of stress he had promised certain things, pledging his honour and the honour of England, and the failure of statesmen to grant these privileges at the Versailles Conference embittered him. The Cairo Conference went a short way to repair these injustices, but some of its decisions he held to contain the seeds of future trouble. However, he thought it would only foment grievances if he did not give out that his criticisms were satisfied. This he did, but in his heart he was never satisfied, as he told us later—when for once he was induced to talk about this, to him, painful subject. So much did he feel this “betrayal of the Arabs” that he refused to profit by his publication of the abridged version of *Revolt in the Desert* and gave every penny he made on it to the R.A.F. Memorial Fund.

At the end of the privately printed edition of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* there is a picture, taken by Lawrence himself, which shows a group of Arab

horsemen waiting outside the Town Hall in Damascus. They were his faithful bodyguard, picked men from the various tribes who had followed him faithfully and borne the same dangers and hardships. They rode triumphantly into Damascus with him at the end of the campaign, and as he walked into the Town Hall after saying good-bye to them he turned and took this picture. We know from the epilogue to *Seven Pillars* that all personal desire and ambition had already died in him, but still they looked on him as their leader—the man who had led them to a hard-won victory over their old masters the Turks so that they should be a free people once again. That they might exchange Turkish for French or British masters never entered their heads ; they trusted Lawrence too much to have believed it possible. But he knew he would never lead them again ; now the war was over his part was played and the game was in the hands of politicians.

They waited outside that building for days, but they waited in vain. He never came, and at last sadly they left and returned to their tents one by one . . .

Many people were disappointed that he did not assert the Arabs' claims to independence loudly enough at the two Conferences. The odds were too heavily against him ; his feelings were too sore on their behalf ; above all, he did not shine as an orator. He was too shy to be able to stand before an assembly and express his views with vehemence. His genius was for action and for persuading people

into the right course of action by the truth and sincerity of his arguments. Persuading them in a more subtle way than by delivering speeches. He was never a politician, and had no inclination to use the weapons of politicians. Thoroughly discouraged and disillusioned over the results of their scheming, which gave the Arabs little of what had been promised them, he refused official appointments and distinctions and made other plans for himself. Somehow he must get rid of "Lawrence of Arabia." As he once said to Commander Weblin, much later in life, "my past was like a tin can tied to a dog's tail—whatever I did it rattled."

He had always been attracted by the Air Force and now he decided he would try and bury himself in it and start a new and useful life in its ranks, forswearing promotion or a commission. "Nothing will induce me to command again." With the help of Lord Trenchard, who was then Chief of the Air Staff and one of the men he admired tremendously (this admiration was fully returned), he joined the R.A.F. as John Hume Ross in August, 1922. Talking about it later he told me that this was no sudden decision: none of his decisions was—however unexpected they may have seemed to outsiders.

As a recruit he was posted to the R.A.F. depot at Uxbridge, and there somehow he had to adjust himself to a totally new way of life. That it was a difficult and almost painful adjustment we know now from his letters and later conversation. He suffered from having no privacy, and found many

of the rules and regulations irksome and unnecessary. And though he preferred the "plain to the elaborated man," a certain fastidiousness in his make-up revolted at such an intimate contact with the conversation and behaviour of the same plain man. The notes he made at this time have largely gone to make *The Mint*—his unpublished book on his early experiences in the R.A.F.

From Uxbridge he was sent to Farnborough, which delighted him as he was able, through his expert knowledge of photography, to get far more interesting work there in the School of Photography than he had had as a raw recruit at Uxbridge.

But unfortunately the Press discovered his retreat. "Lawrence of Arabia" had joined the R.A.F. and was stationed at Farnborough! A regular epidemic of publicity broke out. What were his motives in hiding himself like this? Was he spying on behalf of the Air Council? Few people were single-minded enough to believe that the truth was simpler than that.

Afterwards, talking of this time, he told me that the men were never party to these suspicions. They accepted him as he was; they understood him and did their best to defend him and his precious leisure times from inquisitive and ubiquitous journalists. He laughed when he recalled some of the tricks played on them by the men, who "had them on" with tall stories about him or even threatened them with physical violence when they wouldn't clear out.

Either because of the spate of newspaper publicity or for some other reason, the authorities decided that it was undesirable for Colonel Lawrence to serve in the Royal Air Force under an assumed name, and he was discharged in February, 1925.

Again he refused a civil appointment and in March, 1923, with official approval, he joined the Royal Tank Corps under the name of Thomas Edward Shaw. He was sent to Bovington Camp, Wool, Dorset, where he remained for nearly one and a half years.

While he was there he took his little cottage, Clouds Hill, so that he could at last have some place which was his own. A place in which to keep his precious books, where he could work quietly and alone, where he could rest and listen to music and where he could entertain the friends for whom he cared. It was near Bovington Camp and he could go there whenever he had spare time.

I never went to Clouds Hill, but I know from all he told me how much it meant to him. There he took his Tank Corps friends, and there too came people from another world, people such as Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Shaw and E. M. Forster. He admired Thomas Hardy immensely and to his delight he got to know him and became a regular visitor on Sundays to Max Gate.

He also spent considerable time exploring the country-side and such historic towns as Salisbury, Exeter and Winchester within the reach of his fast motor-bicycle. So his service in the Tank Corps, for all the revulsion he felt for it in certain aspects

(apparent in the long letters he wrote at this time addressed from "Tank town"), was not entirely drudgery or unhappiness and it revived in him his old interest in archæology.

In his first book on Lawrence, Robert Graves says that he had "at least one serious conflict with Authority in the Royal Tank Corps, when he was brought up on the charge of insubordination to a Corporal. (Probably more.) But none of them seem to have had unfortunate sequels, for when he left the Tank Corps his character sheet was free of major entries."<sup>1</sup>

In my copy he has ringed the word "major" and joined it to this footnote: "No: not at all. All entries. I had paid 2/6 for a clean sheet!"

In spite of Clouds Hill and other amenities his craving for the Royal Air Force never left him. Again and again he told me how the sight of an airman in the street used to give him a feeling of home-sickness that was almost physical. In August, 1925, the late John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), who had always counted himself an admiring friend, interceded for him with the Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, and to his intense delight he was sent back to the R.A.F.—his spiritual home, and posted to Cranwell.

At the end of 1925 Sydney was moved to Cranwell from the Staff College, Camberley, where he had been during 1924-5. He was now appointed Chief Staff-Officer at the Royal Air Force Cadet College.

<sup>1</sup> *Lawrence and the Arabs*, p. 422.

All this time I had heard little of Lawrence, who was serving as an aircraftman at Cranwell, but as soon as we arrived there and had settled into the wooden hut which was our official "house," he came to tea and we renewed our acquaintance. The blue suit and white topee had changed into a Service uniform. "Lawrence of Arabia" was now Thomas Edward Shaw.

At tea we talked over Egypt and our first meeting. Although physically he looked the same, he was far more restless than when I had met him in Cairo. Sitting on his chair he would rub its sides with his hands, up and down, up and down, and he would sometimes pass two fingers over his mouth and chin, or rumple up the crest of fair hair which was still unruly and refused to lie down.

The Commandant at Cranwell was Air Vice-Marshal A. E. Borton, who was in command of the Air Force in Palestine when the war ended. Lawrence had a great affection for "Biffy," as he is known to his friends, and refers to him in *Seven Pillars* and in some of his letters to me. His immediate officer in command was Flight-Lieutenant Green who told Sydney that he was delighted to have him with him and that his presence was invaluable, both to him and to the men.

At Cranwell he spent much of his spare time working on the second manuscript of *Seven Pillars*. Nearly all of the first draft had been lost or stolen in 1919 while he was having a cup of coffee in a refreshment-room at Reading station. He was

travelling to Oxford to spend the first Christmas at home after his father's death and had put it down at his feet unthinkingly. He offered £100 at once for its return—there were letters addressed to him in the bag as well as the manuscript—but to this day it has never turned up. Now, at Cranwell, he was near the end of the heart-breaking labour of rewriting it, and his health and nerves were suffering accordingly. Every moment he could snatch from his duties as an airman he devoted to the final details of his laborious task, over which he had spent something like seven years.

One day he turned up at our house carrying the finished manuscript. In size and bulk it was tremendous—a great thick quarto mass written in his own small, neat handwriting and with many corrections.

“Would you leave it for us to read?” I asked him.

“Well, it's terribly long and dull; you'll never get through it!”

“I can try, at any rate. But does it matter how long I keep it?”

“Oh, no; you can keep it as long as you like.”

This deprecating attitude towards himself and his achievements was typical of him. He was genuinely humble about anything he did. As soon as the manuscript was off his hands I noticed a great change in him. He seemed altogether freer and lighter in spirit. In it he had finally worked his Arabian experiences—some of which were so terrible

—off his mind, and it was as if he had got rid of a heavy burden that had been weighing him down. Added to that, the actual writing of the book had worried and obsessed him. Now the child was born and he was free.

The bulky manuscript that Sydney and I read with so much interest was printed in a room behind Whiteley's by Lawrence with the help of a man called Pyke. There were no profits from it; in fact, he was £15,000 in debt to his bank over it. Subscribers paid £30 a copy, but each one had cost him £90. To pay off this debt was the reason why he allowed the abridged edition *Revolt in the Desert* to be published.

Afraid of the publicity it would entail for him, he applied to be sent overseas to escape it. Lord Trenchard, fully appreciating the situation, agreed to his request and had him posted to the R.A.F. depot at Karachi.

Talking of this time at Mount Batten afterwards, especially on cold winter days, he told me that "like a cat in the sun" he had enjoyed the warmth of the Indian station tremendously. In England he always found it hard to keep warm, and we used to compare notes about the best way to warm ourselves up, as I too feel the cold very much.

After some months at Karachi he was sent to an isolated fort in Waziristan, called Miranshah, on the Afghan border. There he found life quiet and peaceful and was as happy, he afterwards told me, as he had ever been before.

### III

AFTER Cranwell, Sydney went to the Air Ministry where he was made responsible for organizing the Schneider Cup Air Race, to be held in the Solent in September, 1929. Later he was appointed Commanding Officer of the R.A.F. Flying-Boat station at Cattewater—later called Mount Batten—which lies under the shadow of Plymouth Hoe. From here he carried on his Schneider preparations.

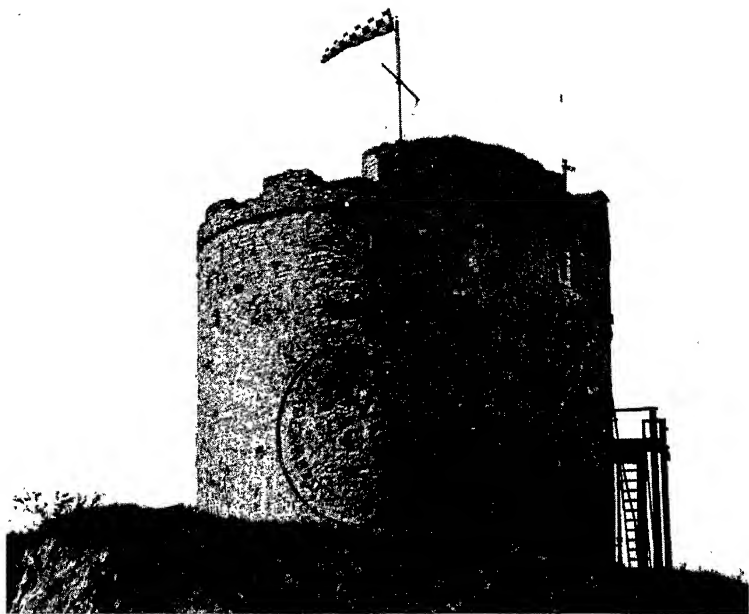
Mount Batten is a peninsula, almost an island and a little like a long-handled frying-pan in shape, which sticks out between the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Cattewater. A narrow road from the fortress of Staddon connects it with the land and makes it seem strangely inaccessible and cut off from the rest of the world. The round Martello tower standing on its rocky top shows that for some time it formed part of the port defences, but before the Air Force took it over it was used as a playground by the people of Plymouth and its old public house, the Castle Arms, was a favourite rendezvous of sailors, fishermen and seamen.

On the other side of the peninsula boats landed at the Mount Batten breakwater, but during the war of 1914-18 the whole area had been temporarily



*Sasha*

MYSELF



THE MARTELLO TOWER

PHOTOGRAPH DELETED BY  
ORDER OF THE CENSOR

converted into a seaplane station which was closed when the war ended. The Air Ministry decided to reopen it as a permanent base, and Sydney went to take command and organize its development.

It was a joy to help it grow into its new shape. I love to plan, alter and arrange houses and gardens, and here I had plenty of scope. The Castle Arms became the official residence of the Commanding Officer, and soon after he came, Lawrence christened it "The Fisherman's Arms." It had its own landing-jetty and a wide lawn with a flagstaff in the middle which we called the quarter-deck. War-time debris had to be removed ; the beach cleared of driftwood and rubbish cast up by the tide for years ; the house had to be redecorated and a garden made along the water-front.

I saw to the latter things while Sydney was busy having new slipways and a marine-craft dock constructed, turning the fishermen's old cottages into comfortable quarters for the married airmen and contriving a gymnasium and tennis-courts, and squash-court.

Soon he had transformed the whole place. It has been a popular station ever since, both for airmen and officers, and is an excellent flying-boat base as there is accommodation for two squadrons in the estuary of the Cattewater, with sheltered moorings and slipways.

I settled down in our new station feeling it was really home. I had loved the place from the beginning—even in its rough, unfinished state—

because of its beautiful views and its position right on the sea. Plymouth Hoe . . . Drake's Island . . . they were names to conjure with and excite the imagination . . . Great ocean-going liners—how different in size and shape and safety from Drake's and Raleigh's small gallant ships—dropped anchor opposite. On fine summer evenings the Brixham trawlers would sail smoothly into the Sound. The setting sun lit up their rust-coloured sails against a misty background and everything was steeped in calm—a fitting background, it seems now, for the happy days we were all to have there.

Lawrence's own description of it, which he wrote in a letter to Mr. H. S. Ede, is amusing and vivid. "Cattewater proves to be about 100 airmen, pressed tightly on a rock, half-awash in the Sound ; a peninsula really, like a fossil lizard swimming from Mount Batten golf-links across the harbour towards Plymouth town. The sea is 30 yards from our hut one way, and 70 yards the other. The Camp officers are peaceful, it seems, and the airmen reasonably happy. That is good hearing, for me, as I am to share their good fortune."

## IV

MEANWHILE there was unrest on the North-West Frontier where Aircraftman Shaw was serving. All his life rumour followed him like a shadow. Russian anti-British propaganda actively fostered it in this case. When it leaked out that he was stationed in Waziristan, no foreigner could possibly credit the fact that the British Government had—without ulterior motive—buried one of the great figures of the European War under an assumed name in an obscure R.A.F. outpost, and it was whispered that “Lawrence of Arabia, the arch-spy of the world,” was organizing the revolt in Afghanistan that eventually led to the overthrow of King Amanullah. British Communists and Socialists believed this to be true as well, and there were public demonstrations against him in the streets of London—in one of which he was burned in effigy on Tower Hill, like Guy Fawkes.

Fearing serious trouble the Government of India cabled to London, and the Air Ministry summoned him home. Once again through no fault of his own he was dragged out of a quiet retreat, and I know he felt bitter about it at the time. He was flown down to Karachi and put on board a

P. & O. liner—the *Rajputana*—at Bombay, bound for England.

We never talked about this voyage, but only the other day I came across a young man who had been on board. He told me that except for exercise Lawrence never left his cabin if he could help it, preferring the quiet and peace of his own company to the curious glances and inquisitive questions perpetually aimed at him by well-meaning people.

During his time in India he had read and thought a great deal, and the quiet, secluded life in the Waziristan fort had given him the opportunity—not of spying !—but of going on with his writing, a perfectly harmless pursuit. He finished *The Mint*, which the public may not read until 1950. It will only be published with the consent of the then Chief of Air Staff as its subject is an outspoken account of the R.A.F. He would never lend me the manuscript as he always said that I should hate it. But I have read it lately and as usual he was right. He disliked it also, but he needed to get certain things out of his system ; besides, he had “seen many things in the Service that he would like to have put right.”

Now, on the *Rajputana*, confined to his cabin as a refuge from the curious, he spent his time on the translation of Homer's *Odyssey* which he had just started in India. This translation was a work which lasted for several years and often meant pain and grief to him, as I know from the hours he spent over it—“hard labour” he called it—at Mount Batten.

Why did he undertake it? He told me that Bruce Rogers, the American book designer, had approached him saying that a friend, Colonel Isham, had suggested—"Why not get Lawrence to do it? He's just the man." But Lawrence did not think so. He refused to do it, saying he was not capable. But at last, needing money to buy a new motor-bicycle on his return to England, he agreed to undertake it.

Contrary to popular belief he had very little money when he ceased to be "Colonel Lawrence." He had no private means and having refused fat posts and salaries he had to live on his airman's pay. He gave all his profits from *Revolt in the Desert* away after he had cleared his debt to the bank. But as he loved books, finely printed ones especially, and classical music for his gramophone, and a fast motor-bicycle, it is quite understandable that he should have wanted to make a little extra money to obtain these luxuries by means of his pen and his scholarship.

## V

THE *Rajputana's* first port of call in England was Plymouth. Knowing he was a friend of Lawrence's, Lord Trenchard sent for Sydney and instructed him to meet the boat, get Lawrence quietly ashore, and tell him to go on leave immediately without even reporting to the Air Ministry. At the same time, in view of the public interest concerning his hurried departure from India, exaggerated accounts of which had been appearing for some time, Lord Trenchard emphatically did not want to give the Press the further titbit of knowing that he had been spirited away in a fast Air Force launch.

Sydney, feeling like a conspirator in a boy's adventure story, returned to Plymouth and made his plans. By long-established custom the Guardship pinnace of the Commander-in-Chief at Plymouth meets every incoming liner, and a Naval Officer goes on board to pay his compliments to the Captain and to take off any ratings due to disembark. Sydney thought it would be quite simple to make use of this practice and, by going out himself in the pinnace, remove Aircraftman Shaw unnoticed instead of letting him go on to Tilbury or Southampton Docks with the other rankers. The Com-

mander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Rudolph Bentinck, agreed to Sydney's plan, which seemed a perfect one. But alas ! for mice and men—from the very first everything went wrong.

The *Rajputana* was due to anchor before dawn on Saturday, February 2nd, 1929. Sydney woke early to find to his dismay that Plymouth Sound was enveloped in a thick fog. The Captain of the P. & O. signalled that he would not attempt to reach his moorings till daylight. The only thing to do was to go out into the Sound and wait until the liner arrived.

When the pinnacle turned up at Cattewater, Sydney, dressed in mufti and feeling more than ever like a conspirator, got on board and they chugged their way through the dense fog to the middle of the Sound. There they shut off steam and waited for daylight and the appearance of the liner. The water was dead calm and oily, and the whole atmosphere a perfect setting for a mysterious drama. "Ideal smuggling weather !" Sydney laughingly said when he described his adventures to me later on.

He and Lieutenant-Commander D'Arcy-Evans, who was in charge of the pinnacle, discussed the plan of action. First they would draw up alongside in the ordinary way and the Lieutenant-Commander and Sydney would go on board and greet the Captain. Then the pinnacle would go round quietly to the other side of the ship and, covered by the bustle of passengers disembarking into the P. & O. tender, Lawrence—who had received his

instructions by wireless—would climb down into the pinnace by a rope ladder dropped from one of the hatchways.

In spite of the delay and the fog this plan seemed watertight. But they had not reckoned with the fact that the Press knows everything and is everywhere. Soon a suspicious number of small boats crept out of the mist, and anxious scrutiny through the telescope revealed cameras ready for immediate action. Nothing could be done about it. It would be impossible to escape them altogether and Plymouth Sound is free to everybody. Soon the Press boats were augmented by others belonging to the general public. Rumours had gone forth that "Lawrence of Arabia" was on board the *Rajputana* and everyone wanted to catch a glimpse of him if they possibly could.

At last the big ship loomed up through the mist, slowly crossed the bar, and with a harsh rattle of chains anchored at her moorings. By now it was eight o'clock and broad daylight. Naturally they would be seen, but there was no better plan that they could think of than the one they had already worked out. Accordingly, at the right moment, the Guardship pinnace drew up neatly alongside; Lieutenant-Commander Evans and Sydney went aboard and the pinnace steamed round to the other side. Aircraftman Shaw stood by on the deck above.

So far so good—the Press boats were all on the other side. But the fates had decided to be con-

trary that day. Somehow the rope ladder fouled the hatch doorway and had to be disentangled by Lawrence and the crew. The delay was fatal. The Press boats, discovering the ruse, scurried round after the pinnacle.

There for all to see stood a familiar small, taut figure, whose R.A.F. blue isolated him from the darker uniforms of the crew. "Lawrence of Arabia" had been found. Now at last the rope ladder was disentangled; he climbed down it and jumped into the pinnacle as a single camera clicked. Before the rest of the astonished Press could get their cameras into action away went the Guardship pinnacle. Faster and better handled than the Press boats, it vanished in the direction of Plymouth.

The journalists made all speed after it, but they were on a false scent. Sydney and Lieutenant-Commander Evans with true conspiratorial cunning had, when they were well out of sight of the *Rajputana* and the following little boats, turned about and made full speed for Mount Batten jetty. Lawrence seemed rather put out and irritated by all the fuss, Sydney told me, but chuckled like a schoolboy over their adventure in trying to pull off an unnoticed getaway.

The P. & O. tender had brought him a large bundle of mail and on the shoreward journey, after a casual examination of it, to Sydney's astonishment he threw some of it into the sea! "Why are you doing that?" he asked him.

"Well," said Lawrence, "it is mostly rubbish,

and when it's addressed to Colonel Lawrence I know it's from complete strangers, or from people who won't respect my change of name."

"But remember all the journalists who are prowling round the Sound—they'll be only too delighted to pick up some of your mail, especially if it's unopened!"

"Oh, I'll risk that," he answered carelessly and threw in the rest.

In due course they landed at the jetty, and at breakfast he and Sydney gloated over having—as they fondly thought—foiled the Press. But they had still to get to London where Lawrence had decided to go to Sir Herbert Baker's office in Westminster. After discussing all sorts of ways and means of avoiding the boat train from Plymouth they decided to motor to Newton Abbot to pick up an ordinary train. I was staying at my sister's flat in Cromwell Road and knew nothing of all these adventures.

In Newton Abbot station they found a train waiting and installed themselves in a coach labelled Paddington, still feeling triumphant and very pleased with themselves. In a few moments there steamed in what looked like an ordinary local train and came to a standstill just behind them. They thought nothing of it and settled down to a comfortable long journey and a good talk as they hadn't seen each other for some time.

## VI

BUT once again the fates played a trick on them. The train they were standing near was a second instalment of the P. & O. boat train ! The coach in which they sat was coupled to it and away they puffed towards London. At lunch-time they had to pick their way along the corridor past luggage labelled " P. & O. *Rajputana* " and they were nearly doubled up with laughter by the time they reached the dining-car.

" What did you talk about on the journey ? " I asked Sydney afterwards.

" I asked Lawrence what he was going to do and whether he minded having to leave India so suddenly. He told me that he *had* minded but that he'd enjoyed the flight to Karachi very much ; it had been some compensation for pulling up his roots so violently. As for the future—he didn't seem to know what he wanted to do, but by the time we reached London he said he would like to join us at Mount Batten."

Of course he had been spotted on the train by reporters and his fellow-passengers, and at Exeter the pressmen rushed for the Telegraph Office and wired to their papers. When the train drew into

Paddington Station the platform was alive with reporters whose orders were: "‘Lawrence of Arabia’ must at all costs be found, photographed and interviewed." There was a perfect battery of cameras, Sydney said; but he was determined in spite of everything to obey Lord Trenchard’s orders to allow no photographs to be taken and to avoid all publicity if he possibly could.

They mixed in with the other passengers and busied themselves about their luggage, trying to hide their identity and put the reporters off the scent. The lucky and wily one who had managed to get a snapshot of Lawrence climbing down the *Rajputana’s* side on a rope ladder held his tongue. He’d got a scoop for his paper—the *Daily Mirror*—and knew it.

"I’ll go on with the luggage and find a taxi," Sydney said, "while you go round the other way. I’ll pick you up at the usual entrance."

Lawrence walked off and a reporter accosted him.

"Is your name Shaw?"

"Certainly not, my name’s Smith!"

Hearing this bit of mischief Sydney gasped, not expecting for a moment that the reporter would be side-tracked. But he raised his hat politely and said: "I beg your pardon," and went on with his search. This little incident became a family joke for ever afterwards. "‘Certainly not,’ he replied in a cultured voice, ‘my name’s Smith’" was a famous phrase in the Mount Batten days.

Having secured a taxi Sydney and the porter

piled in the luggage, but to Sydney's horror he was soon surrounded by reporters all asking if they could get an interview. He beckoned to Lawrence, who appeared round the corner, to hurry and jump in, but the small figure in its aircraftman's uniform walked along as nonchalantly as usual, refusing to hurry himself as he got into the taxi.

Sydney, worried about his orders, brushed up against a camera that was just going to be used, curtly refused to discuss any interview—"Lawrence is too tired to talk to you," he said brusquely—and slammed the taxi door. Lawrence laughed heartily at his discomfiture and said, "Where are you taking me? We're going to be followed!"

Sydney looked out of the little window at the back of the taxi and there, sure enough, were the reporters piling themselves and their cameras into two other taxis. "Start towards Piccadilly," he called out to the elderly taxi-driver, "and hurry, please; we want to get on."

But hurry was a word unknown to that particular driver or else he had been well bribed to go slowly. His taxi crawled along, the pursuers close on its back wheels.

"But where are we going?" laughed Lawrence. "They'll soon trail us to Westminster."

"I know," said Sydney, and leaning out he told the old driver to go to the Park Lane entrance of the R.A.F. Club in Piccadilly. "We can come out at the other entrance and throw them off the scent that way."

But as they ambled along through the Park he realized they had no hope of throwing off their pursuers.

"Drive to Marble Arch," he called out desperately, "and for goodness' sake hurry!"

"We might get into a whirl of traffic and lose them that way," he said to Lawrence. "At any rate we must play for time."

But still the taxi slowly chugged along and still the other two taxis followed closely behind. There was no doubt whatever that the driver's palm had been well greased.

Again the fates were at their tricks. For some mysterious reason the round-about at Marble Arch was almost empty of traffic and once again Sydney's plans were foiled. Then another idea came to him. "I've got it! Clare is staying with her sister in Cromwell Road; it's hopeless to try and get you to Baker's place in Westminster—you'd be mobbed. We'll go to their flat and you can get over to Westminster later in the evening."

"Good idea," said Lawrence, chuckling, and again the taxi was redirected and set off at its snail's pace towards the Cromwell Road. When they reached the flats, Sydney saw that the other taxis were drawing up behind them. He flung open the door and said urgently to Lawrence: "Now go ahead—I'll bring your bag," and tried to rush him out into the entrance of the flats. But he simply would not be hurried; he was enjoying the joke too much, and it was a characteristic

of his to refuse to go at anything but his own pace.

My sister and I were having a quiet afternoon in blissful ignorance of the dramatic happenings of the day. The bell rang. I went to the door. Before I could open it properly some luggage and a body hurtled in and nearly knocked me off my feet. "Lawrence of Arabia" had arrived!

Sydney, finding the reporters surging round, had finally pushed him in unceremoniously just as a flash and a loud click went off. The result was a beautiful photograph of Sydney's back and a few pieces of luggage. We banged the door and Sydney brought in the rest of the baggage afterwards, the reporters besieging him with questions and requests to interview Lawrence. All of these he refused shortly, feeling at the same time somewhat churlish as they were very nice about it, he told me afterwards, "and it was only their job, after all."

Lawrence and I stood in the passage, rather dishevelled and breathless after our collision, and roared with laughter at the unconventional manner of our meeting. I believe that our real friendship started from that moment. No constraint or shyness could possibly exist between us afterwards!

The story of the escapade and of his time in India lasted through tea and dinner, and when we peeped out of the window we saw the reporters still patiently waiting down below with the addition of a crowd of ordinary people. How could he escape? We couldn't put him up for the night as there was no

room, so we started to plan his retreat. I remembered there was a back way out of the flat, which led one across the courtyard, past the porter's flat, and into the garage where my car was standing. If only we could reach it without being seen we could drive out by a back street and all would be well. Down the stairs we crept and made our way to the mews—not a soul was in sight. I got out the car and drove him off completely unobserved.

This was the first of the many drives we had together, and I remember that even in the flurry of the escape he had time to tell me that he felt complete confidence in my driving. We reached Sir Herbert Baker's office quite safely, and when I drove back to the flat I found the crowd still waiting outside. We got no sleep that night because the telephone and the doorbell rang the whole time. Sydney missed all this because he had had to leave us during the evening. For days afterwards letters addressed to "Colonel Lawrence of Arabia" arrived at the flat and the excitement did not die down for some time.

Next day Lord Trenchard wanted to see Sydney and Lawrence and hear their report on his arrival. I drove them out to Dancer's Hill House near Barnet, where they told Lord Trenchard all about the mishaps and adventures of the day before. He quite understood that they had been unavoidable and only regretted that there had been so much publicity. After our visit we drove quietly back

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

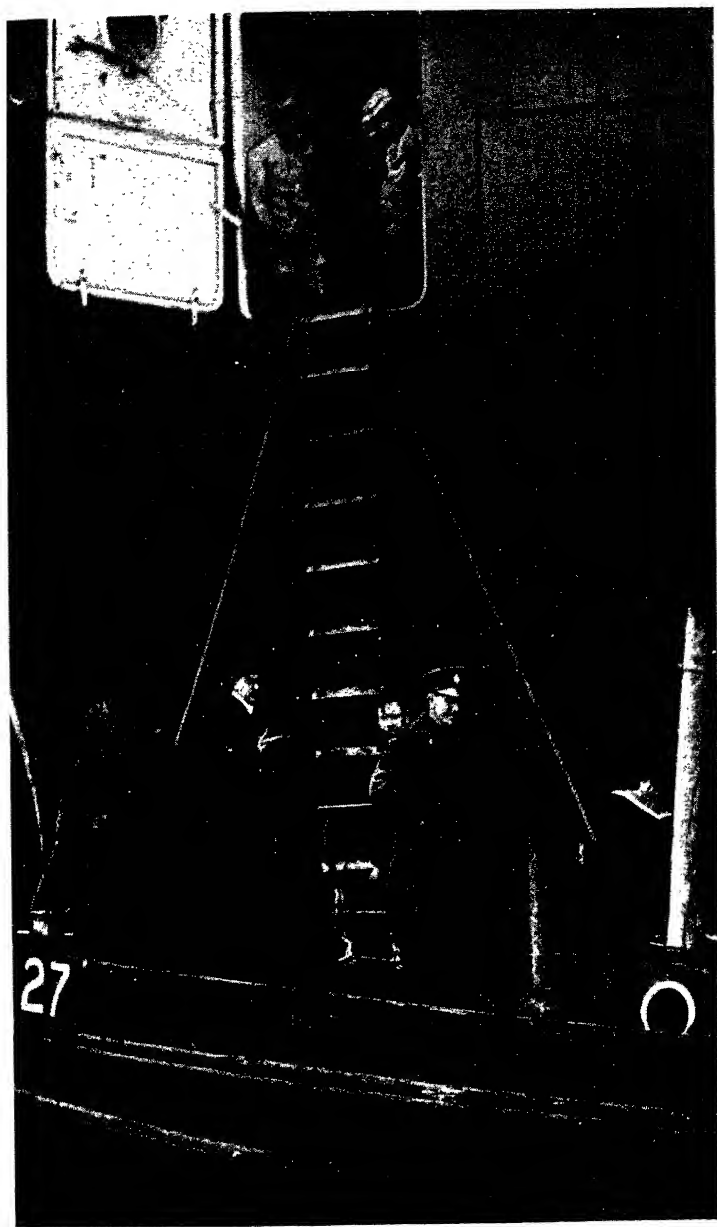
to London discussing the prospect of Lawrence's coming to Mount Batten after his month's leave, and we all three made up our minds that this would be an ideal arrangement.

## VII

ONE cold March afternoon a shining and powerful Brough motor-bicycle roared to a standstill at the gates of Cattewater. On it was a small blue-clad figure, very neat and smart, with peaked cap, goggles, gauntlet gloves and small dispatch-case slung on his back. Aircraftman Shaw had arrived to take his place in the miniature world of an R.A.F. Station.

The completeness and independence of this miniature world was what chiefly attracted him to it, he subsequently told me. The sight of him, dressed like that, later became a familiar one. He had not had to wait for his new motor-bicycle until the *Odyssey* was finished, but had found an anonymous present of a brand-new one on his return from India. The anonymous and generous donors were Mr. and Mrs. George Bernard Shaw.

After reporting in the usual way he came up to "The Fisherman's Arms" to tell us of his arrival and make the acquaintance of the rest of the family—Maureen, aged twelve, our daughter who had always been nicknamed "Squeak," and the two golden retrievers "Banner" and "Leo," and "Billy" the cocker spaniel. His initials—T. E. S.





T. E. S.



—gave us a new name for him, and as we always called him by it from this time on, I shall refer to him as “Tes” in future.

The next day he took up his duties. Although many of them were merely routine ones he always carried them out punctiliously and the N.C.O.’s never had reason to haul him over the coals or to remind him of his obligations.

These duties that he shared in common with the other aircraftmen were cleaning out the barrack room ; daily drill ; duty watch—four hours on, eight hours off ; going out periodically in all weathers to row round the flying-boats at their moorings and see whether they were dragging anchor or not ; and fixing on riding-lights when sea and spray were high.

He would always volunteer for the latter duties when the weather was very bad, and I can see him now, landing on the jetty in yellow oilskins much too big for him, with his face red from the cold wind and wet with rain or spray, looking like a boy as he leapt out of the duty motor-boat.

His uniform was always beautifully cut and he kept it spotless and well-creased, but he could never get oilskins to fit his slight build. This did not seem to worry him though, or to impair his nimbleness when he was out doing a job in bad weather.

The photographs of him taken at this period usually show him in “scruff order”—his name for overalls. But he was very proud of his uniform and except for one grey-flannel suit he had no other

clothes when he was at Mount Batten. It has sometimes been said that he despised smartness and good drill. This was quite wrong. He always took a quiet pleasure in his uniform, although he advocated certain reforms in it which have since been adopted.

One was abolishing the tight high collar, which he said an airman unhooked as soon as he got indoors so that at once he looked untidy. The other was breeches and puttees. His own puttees always looked neat and were well put on, but he considered them a waste of time. The high collar has given way now to a soft shirt and tie, and the puttees and breeches to long trousers.

He was directly responsible for getting rid of the swagger cane. "Silly bodkin of a thing," he called it to Liddell Hart, and he thought it perfectly useless to an airman. High officials agreeing with him, it soon vanished from the Air Force.

On drill he had definite ideas which interested Sydney very much. He considered that as airmen are chosen for their intelligence as well as for their good health and constitution, they should not have to go through mechanical repetitions of drill which might make them spiritless. Appeal to their intelligence, he said, and they will drill as smartly as anyone. Sydney agreed with him on this point and was glad to have the opinion of someone who belonged to the ranks and actually had to do the drill himself.

For some time Tes had given careful thought to

all problems concerning the progress and well-being of the Air Force, and knowing this, Sydney determined to take full advantage of his remarkable clear-sightedness. Working together they gradually developed a keen appreciation for each other's character and, complementing each other's qualities, they formed a perfect team and were known in the station as "the C.O. and his shadow."

Sydney consulted him on all matters concerning the men's comfort and efficiency, and Tes, who lived in the barrack room among them, could tell him of little things that made for unnecessary irritation or fatigue and which Sydney could then put right.

"You can see better at the bottom of the ladder than at the top," he used to say, and as Sydney's watchword has always been : "Look after the men and they will look after you," it was natural that he should take advantage of Tes's personal experience of what would add to the men's convenience in small ways and prevent their having grievances.

He thought, too, that it would be stupid to waste Tes's experience and abilities by not giving them an outlet. So he wisely employed him in the technical office and later on as his personal clerk.

One of the things they agreed upon unanimously was their mutual dislike of the name "Cattewater" R.A.F. Station. One evening Tes joked about it and said : "Why, if you instructed the laundry to deliver your clean clothes at Cattewater the vanman would be justified in throwing them into the sea !" This was such a ridiculous thought that he and

Sydney promptly concocted a letter to the Air Ministry asking that it should be named Mount Batten after the pier on the other side of the peninsula. This was done officially soon afterwards.

As he was older and wore a natural air of quiet authority, his fellow-aircraftmen always came to him for advice and help in all their personal problems. He was just as popular here with the men as he had been everywhere else and they were proud to have him with them. We often heard them saying to the Sunday or half-holiday visitors they were showing round the Station, "That's the hut where Colonel Lawrence lives!"

He never asked for special favours, so there was no jealousy. The men seemed to accept it as perfectly natural that he should be so intimate with us, and he never allowed his duties to be interfered with by taking extra time off. From 4 p.m. an airman's time is his own and it was after then that Tes came to us for music, rode the country-side on his motor-bicycle, translated the *Odyssey* or later went for picnics with me in his speed-boat.

He slept in a barrack with twenty other airmen and took his turn in cleaning it out. He found that several of his companions liked books and music, so he supplied them with both. He installed a radio and a gramophone in the hut and, passing by, I often heard a Beethoven Symphony, a Bach Chorale or a concert from Munich or Vienna. He detested jazz, and the men accepted his dislikes and pre-

ferences and grew surprisingly fond of classical music. One of his friends was Aircraftman Higgins—tall, shy, the clean, rugged type Tes admired—who had excellent taste in both books and music. Before joining the Air Force, Higgins had been a professional boxer.

If they all woke early Tes would turn on the radio—sometimes at 6 a.m. He himself could seldom sleep after three and he told me that he did his best thinking in those early hours when everyone else was asleep.

“People’s vibrations are turned off then and don’t interfere ; I’ve more freedom and space to think in,” he said.

He liked going to bed early and as soon as the ten-o’clock trumpet blew he would say good-night and go off to his hut. Late hours were not for him, he said, and he had made a rule for himself about going to bed early which, except on very rare occasions, he would never break. He never dreamed of making rules for other people, however, and thought each person should do as he liked and live according to his own rhythm.

## VIII

WHEN I am reading a book I always want to know what the people in it look like, whether they are real or imaginary. So it's about time I gave you my impressions of Tes's appearance, gathered bit by bit as I came to know him well. He was small, yet all his public portraits somehow give the impression that he was a tall man. Although just under 5 feet 6 inches he was perfectly proportioned, with small bones and small feet and hands. His fingers were long and slender, but when I knew him his hands had become roughened through mechanical work. It was his head that gave one the photographic impression that he was a big man. Over large for his height, its big forehead and jutting chin showed you both his intellectual and spiritual stature and his strength of character and will. His ears were small and he wore his wiry, ash-coloured hair cut short except in the front where it always stood up straight. In later years his fair complexion took on a weather-beaten look.

He weighed on the average 9 stone 4, although at one time the wear and tear of the Arabian campaign brought him down to 6 stone 10. His quick, rather jerky way of moving made you think he was

walking on his toes. He carried his head a little forward. This was a family characteristic, and his brothers, Bob and Arnold, are inclined to do the same.

The only person I have ever seen who is at all like him is Lord Clydesdale. Only the other day he walked into the room and I had quite a sensation of shock—his appearance at a distance was so like that of Tes.

As I have said before, his voice was soft and attractive, with at times the merest suspicion of the soft lilt characteristic of the Irish. He often indulged in a fat chuckle of amusement; it was never, as people have described it, anything like a giggle. He didn't laugh very often, but when he did it was very heartily, thrusting his chin outward and with the corners of his mouth curling up. In our copy of *Lawrence and the Arabs* by Robert Graves, Tes has underlined the statement "he grins a lot and laughs seldom," and written in the margin "not true"!

But above all, his eyes were his dominating and unforgettable feature. When you looked into his eyes you forgot everything else and he seemed to look right through you. They were a clear light steely blue and set deep under his jutting brows. To my mind none of his portraits, except the early photograph facing page 173, give any idea of this strange, compelling look. They may be excellent in detail and general poise but they somehow miss his dominating characteristic . . .

One day when we looked at some of his pictures he thought of giving me a pastel of Kennington's, but because he disliked it himself, calling it "the Cheshire cat," he decided in the end that I shouldn't have it.

He had a curious trick of grasping his right wrist with his left hand and holding it against his right shoulder under his chin. This was a souvenir of the time he broke it at Cranwell ; it had never set properly and always gave him a certain amount of pain, which he ignored.

Another mannerism of his was propping his right elbow on his left hand and resting his chin on the upturned palm. If he was perplexed, interested or excited, he would run his fingers through his tousled hair. He loved sitting with his hands clasped behind his head, rocking his chair to and fro. The picture of him doing this is so vivid in my mind that I can almost see it now.

How can one describe the way in which somebody talks ? Tes had a frequent and expressive habit of saying slowly, ruminatingly : " Yes, yes ; oh, yes," and he liked to use the word " creature "—" nice creature "—" good creature "—and so forth. He never used a word too much. Though he spoke slowly and without much emphasis he never failed to hold your attention completely. On the other hand, with his naturally deliberate speech went an amazing mental quickness. I have never seen anyone read so quickly. He could get through a novel in a couple of hours. His intuitive understanding

told him what speakers or writers were trying to express even when they didn't know exactly how to do it. Once he told me that he never forgot anything he'd read in a book and that without an effort he could recall any date. Laughingly Sydney would call him my "encyclopædia," because when I was in doubt over any subject or wanted any information I would immediately go to the telephone and say, "Put me through to Workshops"—which always meant speaking to Tes. I would ask him my question and the answer would be forthcoming either at that moment or not very long afterwards.

When women were present (and I believe always) Tes shunned suggestive or coarse conversation in spite of his keen sense of humour. If anyone had made a doubtful remark in his presence one would have been dreadfully embarrassed. He had, I suppose, complete purity of mind.

He never talked for mere effect and he was always interested in other people's points of view. My sister Lily often remarked that he never talked down to anyone, however humble or ignorant, and that he made you feel at your best. Pompousness and hypocrisy he loathed, and his devilish little imp of mischief would appear whenever he met it and made him tease and embarrass the person who was showing off until he or she was thoroughly uncomfortable.

His body never seemed to matter much to him. In fact he despised, or rather, ignored it. "It

should be servant—not master,” was his philosophy . . . So well had he mastered his own body that his presence was hardly a physical one and he did not see physically. It was the real person inside—the spirit—that mattered to him. “I could meet my own mother in the street and pass her by without seeing her,” he once said to me ; “I simply can’t tell what people look like.”

There is no doubt that Tes, although he could not come to terms with the established religion of the Church, lived a deeply spiritual life based on the life and teachings of Christ. As an undergraduate at Oxford he once sat up all night with a friend discussing on what principle they should base their lives. He himself considered that Christ had lived the most perfect life and he decided to model his on it.

Knowledge of this makes his own easier to understand. Having made up his mind to deny the body for the sake of the spirit and to reject the normal man’s life of love and marriage, instead of entering a monastery and retiring from the world, he lived a monastic life within the world of ordinary beings. Thus he was able to have a deep friendship for a woman—myself—based on the closest ties of sympathy and understanding but containing none of the elements normally associated with love. No effort on his part was needed to do this. His presence was, as I have said elsewhere, hardly a physical one and he never seemed to be aware of oneself physically.

Perhaps this may help to clear up misconceptions

about him. He was neither inhibited nor out of the ordinary except in so far as he deliberately chose to live the life of the spirit and renounce that of the body while he was still a young man. "Flesh fogs the brain," he once said in a letter.

But for all his spirituality, thinking did not bring him peace or real happiness. He could not see the end of life or the future of humanity. Religious theories and doctrines baffled him and he rejected the human shape of God. He was very gentle and tender towards all forms of life, yet he loathed the flesh which covers the spirit inside. Once he stated in a letter that he hated animals. He meant the animality of animals, including humans. Our own dogs he adored, and he would hurt nothing if he could possibly help it.

"In front of Wells to-day," he wrote to Lionel Curtis during this unhappy term at "Tank town," when this revolt against animality was obsessing him, "there was a white-frosted child playing with a ball; this child was quite unconscious of the cathedral (feeling only the pleasure of smooth grass), but from my distance she was so small that she looked no more than a tumbling daisy at the tower-foot: I knew of course that she was animal: and I began in my hatred of animals to balance her against the cathedral: and knew then that I'd destroy the building to save her. That's as irrational as what happened on our coming here, when I swerved Snowy Wallis and myself at 60 m.p.h. on the grass by the roadside, trying vainly

to save a bird which dashed out its life against my side-car. And yet had the world been mine I'd have left out animal life upon it." <sup>1</sup>

This is almost a foreseeing of the way in which his own death was caused twelve years later when, riding at a great pace along a Dorset road, he swerved to save the lives of two aimlessly cycling errand boys and crashed.

Again, he wrote of the Arabian Campaign : " To me an unnecessary action, or shot, or casualty, was not only waste but sin." No, he could not take life or see life taken easily.

After he had finished the *Odyssey* he very much wanted to write another book—but about what? " Books must be forced out of you," he said several times. " They are no good unless you *have* to write them." No such compelling subject presented itself to him, so he was silent and wrote nothing more.

Few things of the senses appealed to him. For instance, he never smoked or drank and said he couldn't imagine why people did either. He hated the smell of smoke and the effect of alcohol on other people. As I, too, did neither, we had another bond in common.

He did not care much for food, but certain simple things like oranges and coffee with cream he enjoyed. His chief hedonistic trait—perhaps his only one—was a love of warmth. Like a cat he was happier and more forthcoming when the sun shone, and he revelled in a very hot bath. If he

<sup>1</sup> From *Letters of T. E. Lawrence*, edited by David Garnett.

were ill—which he seldom allowed himself to be—he soaked himself in a hot bath and it seemed to cure him. “You must let the hot tap run the whole time if you want to keep a bath at the right temperature,” he said. He always used “Golden Glory” soap and when I teased him and said it was an extravagance, he replied : “It smells sweet ; it doesn’t make a mess of the bath ; and you can see through it.” I often brought him a cake of it from Plymouth when I went in to do my shopping.

He believed that the mind should control the body and he never seemed to feel pain. Or perhaps it was that he had a power of neutralizing physical suffering. For instance, once when he held his wrist and I knew it was hurting him I said : “Why don’t you do something . . . see a doctor about it ?” he replied : “It doesn’t matter enough,” and laughed it off. He believed that one should not need pity from other people and he also believed strongly in self-discipline ; that by mastering physical ills one increases one’s power and efficiency . . . “tramping all day restlessly up and down these coral paths in sandals or barefoot, hardening my feet, getting by slow degrees the power to walk with little pain over sharp and burning ground, tempering my already trained body for greater endeavour.”

That was how he set about it in Arabia. Now when I knew him he had won complete mastery over himself.

He had a passion for speed and said it set him free from thinking. The sea was another of his

passions. His mother has told me since that even as a tiny child he adored the sea and was fond of water. For the first eight years of his life he lived by the sea and he seemed to need it afterwards. At Akaba he rushed away and flung himself into the sea as if he felt he must cleanse himself. Curiously enough, from that moment he lost his nerve about bathing and refused to swim again for many years. It was not until we were all on board the yacht *Karen* during the Schneider Cup Race that he conquered this fear.

At Mount Batten he was surrounded by sea and it helped to give him back the calm of spirit which he certainly experienced there.

## IX

Soon after he arrived at Mount Batten Tes was posted to the Marine and Workshop section and Sydney gave him an office over the workshops. I remember my first visit to it. The dogs and I wandered through the big workshops which were humming with activity. Then we climbed up a steep, ladderlike stair and came into a long, low room lined with rough shelves round the walls for storing instruments and files. Books of every kind lay round about ; Tes always had plenty. Authors, known and unknown, sent him their effort to read and pronounce on, and so did publishers who wanted his opinion on the books they produced. He read those that interested him and gave away a good many to us and to his airmen friends.

His desk—an ordinary barrack table—stood in the middle of the room. Its top was always covered with files and office work, except after hours when he used it for his translation of the *Odyssey*. After this visit I went there almost every day. Sometimes we talked ; sometimes he worked while I picked up one of his books and read ; sometimes, if he were working on the *Odyssey*, I would sit and do nothing. Even now I can smell the strange,

rather musty smell of the thin yellowish rice-paper he used for writing on. Many of his letters were written on it too. I still have one or two odd bits of paper on which he scribbled his first rough translation and then flung into the waste-paper basket. I have since been able to fit them into the finished book of the *Odyssey*.

The room had just a rough wooden floor ; it was really only an office attic, but to Tes it seemed a palace because it was entirely his own. There were no pictures, no comfortable chairs, just a revolving office chair at his desk and a couple of hard small chairs. An airman's "biscuit"—half of the two folding sections which form an airman's mattress—lay on the floor in one corner, and Banner and Leo and Billy thought it had been put down for them to lie on.

Although he shrank from human contact he often stroked the dogs and they loved sitting at his feet. Often I would lose them and, with a shrewd suspicion as to where they were, I climbed the ladder and found them. Banner was his favourite because he admired his dignity, but Leo was the most demonstratively affectionate and liked to be with him whenever possible.

Dignity was a quality Tes admired very much. He said that the Arabs had it and that it was an essential quality in a woman. He disliked noisy gushing women and described a famous and volatile hostess as "a cocktail of a woman."

He liked to spoil the dogs and give them all the

things they specially liked. He often rode into Plymouth on his motor-bicycle simply to buy them the marshmallows and biscuits which he always kept in his office for them. Leo, in particular, adored marshmallows and a small custard biscuit mentioned later by Tes in one of his letters. Billy, a small golden cocker, was amusing in a way quite his own. He was impish and very much alive and Tes enjoyed teasing him. If I went away I knew he would take care of the dogs and send me news of them.

When the coffee came in after dinner Tes used to count out some white coffee-sugar crystals and place them on the floor in a row—five crystals for each dog. They sat with ears cocked and watched him eagerly while the performance went on and then crunched up their rations with delight.

One day in London Tes went into the Bond Street Tube Station and at the top of the escalator he saw a notice: "All dogs must be carried." When he came back to Mount Batten he said: "You know I couldn't help seeing a picture of you with Banner and Leo tucked nervously under your arm, carefully trailing down the stairway." This picture amused him so much that he often mentioned it and laughed at the idea.

As well as going to visit him in his office he came in and out of our own house, and though at first he was a little tense, as if in a way he were shutting us out, after a few weeks he relaxed and became his natural self—without shyness or reserve. As our

house stood between his office and the barrack hut he often had to pass our door and seldom did so without dropping in.

Even when we had visitors it made no difference to his feeling of ease. His so-called shyness never appeared again, although other people might be there. I remember one lovely sunny morning in particular. We were sitting in a room overlooking the Cattewater, and he came in to find it full of women having a late breakfast. Of course he joined us, but instead of sitting down at the table he perched on a corner of the sideboard with his legs swinging gaily, drinking coffee and laughing and talking. I said to him: "Wouldn't this be a marvellous picture for the Press of the famous Colonel Lawrence who is supposed to be a woman hater?" He chuckled as the idea amused him tremendously.

No little thing was ever too much trouble for him to do. During one of his busy days of holiday he searched London for a record I felt I would like to have. Another time he took endless trouble to get the name and address of an expert to whom I could send a miniature of which I wanted to get particulars.

A little incident which amused Sydney very much was my asking Tes to mend my pet scent spray. Other people had completely failed to do it; he took it to his workshop and soon it came back in perfect order. It was extraordinary how he always did manage to do what other people had failed in.


One day he found a messenger boy waiting at the door saying he'd rung several times. Tes came in and told me the bell was out of order and that he would mend it for me. I should never have dreamed of asking him, but he seemed to enjoy doing it and fixed it quite quickly.


Yet in spite of his affectionate appreciation of the home life and the peaceful family atmosphere he found with us at "The Fisherman's Arms," in general he did not believe in human contacts. Seldom, perhaps never, did he give the whole of himself to anyone. He even disliked shaking hands, and when he was introduced to anyone he would instinctively put his hands behind his back and make a slight bow. It was almost a defensive attitude. Even if I hadn't seen him for some time I wouldn't dream of shaking hands with him.

He accepted, and was accepted by, our daughter Squeak as part of the family. She was growing fast at this time and was inclined to be fat, and at school she was not getting on as well as we thought she should. Sydney and I were discussing this one day and Tes said: "Don't worry—when the body is growing the mind can't grow too. It's a mistake to try and force it because until she is fifteen I am convinced that a girl never really learns anything."

I was surprised at this remark as usually he didn't seem to take much notice of children or of personal matters. He teased Squeak a good deal, but in a very kindly way . . . "Squeak's eaten all Leo's marshmallows!" would be his opening remark

Squeak, 

Squeak, 

Squeak .

from

T.

E.

S.

CHILD OF THE DEEP

INSCRIPTION BY T.E.S.

On the front page of *Child of the Deep*, by Joan Lowell, which he presented to Squeak.

some days . . . and if I were hauling her over the coals about anything he would stand up for her and tease me in return . . . "What Squeak needs is a pound of ice-cream !" or "I think you must give her a box of chocolates." Of course it ended in all three of us laughing and any slight tension was instantly broken.

If when I was away she was ill, he would sit on her bed and joke and talk with her for half an hour at a time, and when Sydney was convalescing after a severe operation, and was very fractious, Tes's patience and tact with him were unending.

## X

THE Schneider Cup Air Race was due to be held on Friday, September 7th, 1929. Months of careful planning beforehand were needed to get every detail right and Sydney, having roused Tes's interest in the race, turned him into his personal clerk and made full use of his clear brain, perfect memory and subtle knowledge of people to help him with its organization.

When he first came to Mount Batten Sydney, too, had found him tense and strung-up. He determined not to waste his unique abilities and thought that more absorbing work than the routine of an ordinary aircraftman would release the tension and make him a happier man. The Marine side of the flying-boat station needed developing. Motor-boats were used to dash to the scene of a crash and do rescue work, but they were always giving engine trouble and their whole design needed improvement. Tes having immediately realized their possibilities, Sydney posted him to Workshops to examine the boats for himself. He also turned over all technical correspondence to him.

Tes got down to work at once. Never content with second-hand knowledge, he dismantled the

engines himself and carefully studied every detail. He soon came to the conclusion that the boats were of the wrong type altogether for use in the Royal Air Force. They were antiquated, expensive to run, and needed a crew of four to man them. He considered that a faster and more economical type of boat might be designed which could dispense with at least one member of the crew. Practice soon turned him into a first-rate mechanic, and his work on the improvement of fast motor-boats has been of great importance since to both the Royal Air Force and the Navy.

This compulsion to find out everything for himself showed itself when he was a boy. His mother has an amusing story to tell of it. One day he was playing with Will, his next youngest brother, in their Oxford garden.

"I wonder what's in that pipe?" said Will, looking up at a large lead pipe which ran down the wall.

"That's all right, Will; I'll soon tell you," comforted Tes, and he marched off and got a hammer and nail. Cheerfully hammering the nail into the pipe a stream of water gushed out and his father had to plug it until they got the plumber!

Once I said to him, half teasing: "I believe there isn't a single thing that you don't know about at first-hand!" His reply was just a laugh, and he said: "Well, I couldn't be a nursery-maid and I can't knit!"

Sydney, being the Air Ministry's representative

on the Schneider Cup Committee, had to go up to London regularly for meetings at the Royal Aero Club. He took Tes with him as his personal clerk, but before doing so he asked whether Lord Trenchard had any objection to it. "No, provided there's no limelight and the Press doesn't get hold of his name," was the answer.

So off they would go from Plymouth by the night train to London. Sydney drove to the station and the old guard would say to him : " Mr. Shaw's in the train, sir ; and he's got his pillow." Tes travelled third-class, while Sydney, as Commandant, went first. They met next day at Paddington Station, where Tes would go off to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home for a shave and a wash. Later they joined forces at the Air Ministry.

If matters would crop up at the meeting with which Sydney disagreed, he would glance at Tes to find a mischievous expression on his face. " Shaw, have you made a note of this ? "

" Yes, sir," Tes would reply, and promptly scribble a few lines which somehow, under cover of the proceedings or a bundle of files, he managed to slip across to Sydney unnoticed. His movements were always very quick and secret ; he seemed to have almost a conjurer's power of appearing and disappearing. Sydney would suddenly find the note under his nose, and with a perfectly solemn face he would read a few rather comic lines suggesting how to get to work to change the decision.

Tes had a genius for out-mancœuvring other

people's arguments and plans of action, bringing them round to his way of thinking so subtly that they were quite unaware of the way in which they were being influenced.

He and Sydney often joked about this like a pair of schoolboys and egged each other on to pull the leg of a solemn member of the Committee.

On one occasion Tes met Mr. C. P. Robertson of the Air Ministry's Press Section. He afterwards became a great friend and was instrumental, in various ways, in keeping him from too much publicity—for which Tes often told me he was most grateful.

At this meeting Air Commodore Fletcher presided. A Treasury official sat opposite him; Sydney sat on his right and Robertson on his left. Just before the proceedings began a small, unobtrusive-looking airman quietly walked into the room and sat down at a desk just behind Sydney. Realizing he was Sydney's personal clerk, Robertson took no notice of him at first, but when he looked at him again during the discussion he suddenly realized in a flash that he was "Lawrence of Arabia." He told me afterwards that he was "terribly thrilled."

The representative of the Treasury made various difficulties, and after the meeting Robertson said to him: "Why on earth did you adopt that sticky attitude? I should have thought that in front of the famous Colonel Lawrence you might have done better."

"Colonel Lawrence ! Where was he ?"

"The little airman in the background taking notes."

"Good heavens ! If I'd known that, they could have had what they liked—I'd have been so engrossed in watching him !"

A few weeks before the race Sydney moved his headquarters to Calshot where the British and Italian teams were to assemble. Here the work increased. Meetings were held daily and the writing of reports and orders kept Tes at his typewriter day and night. He wrote slowly and corrected carefully, and would compose many drafts of an official letter or memorandum before he submitted it for approval. Sometimes, too, he suggested slight alterations in Sydney's letters, and Sydney tells me that he cannot remember a single occasion on which he didn't accept these alterations. They seemed to hit the nail on the head every time.

Many distinguished visitors came to Calshot to see the preparations for the contest, and Tes became a familiar figure on the tarmac. The Secretary of State for Air became perturbed that a mere aircraftman should often be seen hobnobbing publicly with Italian generals and other "big noises"—as Tes called them.

This publicity annoyed but did not really harm Tes. He once said to me : "How long will it be before people cease to look at me as if I were some kind of strange animal ?"

The men here, as they did everywhere else,

accepted him perfectly simply. To them he was just a mate, but a mate whose authority they accepted without question. So in fact did the N.C.O.'s, which proved that he was indeed a born leader. One day Flight-Lieutenant Breaky, who was in charge of the R.A.F. Marine craft at Calshot, and Mr. Robertson went down to the slipway to find a corporal transmitting some orders about a boat.

"Who gave you those orders?" asked Flight-Lieutenant Breaky.

"Mr. Shaw, sir."

"Who is Mr. Shaw?"

"Well, sir, Aircraftman Shaw."

"And why should you, a corporal, take orders from an aircraftman?"

"Well, sir, it seems perfectly natural to take orders from Mr. Shaw."

The key to this unconscious power of leadership is given by Tes himself in Chapter XXV of *Seven Pillars*. He says: "They (the Arabs) taught me that no man could be their leader except he ate the ranks' food, wore their clothes, lived level with them, and yet appeared better in himself." This was exactly what he was doing in the Air Force and, by virtue of his appearing "better in himself," his comrades and even his immediate superiors in rank—the N.C.O.'s—found it "perfectly natural to take orders from Mr. Shaw."

Afterwards Flight-Lieutenant Breaky was in charge of Workshops at Mount Batten and he and Tes became very good friends.

## XI

THE late Major Colin Cooper, who was a great friend of Sydney's, placed his luxurious motor yacht *Karen* at the disposal of Air Vice-Marshal Sir Charles Lamb, Air Officer Commanding Coastal Area, as a floating headquarters before and during the Schneider Race.

With her went a Biscayne Baby speed-boat—a two-seater with a 100 h.p. Scripps engine—which had been specially built by the Perdy Boat Company for speed and ease in manœuvring. Sir Henry Segrave had owned her and brought her back from America after his famous record-breaking motor race. Tes fell in love with her at once, and after Colin Cooper had taken him out in her several times and allowed him to take the wheel, he soon felt he was her master.

During the last phase of the Schneider Cup preparations the *Biscuit*—as we soon christened her—was in constant use. The engine began to show signs of needing a thorough overhaul and Tes offered to undertake it. Colin was impressed by his enthusiasm and by his flair for piloting such a tricky craft. Knowing that his wife disliked and feared the *Biscuit* because of his reckless driving

and had often begged him to give her away, he now offered her to Tes and ourselves as a gift.

I can see the delight on Tes's face now as he eagerly accepted her. Immediately we discussed the ways and means of getting her to Mount Batten, and how we could find money enough to buy the petrol for running her. But it was such a wonderful and generous gift that we made up our minds there and then that nothing would deter us from accepting her. I had come to Calshot for the week of the race and slept on *Karen*. Sydney and Tes would join us for meals and sometimes slept on board too. Tes had a hammock aft with the yacht's crew and felt himself to be in clover. When they were too busy to leave the office Tes made up a bed for Sydney on the table, but where he himself slept on those occasions I don't know. Possibly he curled up on the floor!

At that time there were many things of which Tes had a secret fear. I knew he had been a great swimmer, yet at Mount Batten he had never gone into the sea. He told me that for some unknown reason he had lost his nerve and that his last swim had been during his time at Akaba. Now he made up his mind to try and overcome this fear. Privately he told me he would go in alone one night just to see what happened. We were in the dining saloon one evening when we heard a splash. I knew at once that he had won his battle and forced himself to go in. Every evening after that he went for a

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

swim off the side of the yacht ; once again he had exerted the complete control of himself at which he aimed.

During the preliminary trials of the race the American team dropped out, leaving only the Italians and ourselves. The Italians, who had been having bad luck with their engines and were not quite ready, applied for a postponement of the race. There was a great meeting of the Committee to discuss this request, but the members agreed on finding a postponement contrary to all the rules and conditions laid down beforehand. Only bad-weather conditions affecting both teams could be allowed as a reason for altering the fixture. Sydney says Tes's puckish expression was very marked during this meeting and that it almost shook his own solemnity—which would have been a bad breach of etiquette.

General Balbo and Tes met at Calshot and had many long talks together. The Press would dearly have loved to take photographs of the two of them together, but having been specially asked by Mr. Robertson to respect Tes's privacy, they were splendid and never once published any article about him or photographed him.

Several cars were usually drawn up and parked by the tarmac, and one day Tes came to Sydney in the office chuckling with delight.

"I've got something to show you !" he said and led him down to the line of cars. A terrible smell greeted their noses. Sydney told me that he

thought at once of drains and all sorts of unpleasant things of that kind.

"Look," said Tes mysteriously, lifting the cover of the dickey-seat of a perfectly strange car. The smell was frightful. Sydney held his nose and looked over. There, lying on the seat, was a long-dead porpoise.

Tes laughed tremendously. "What shall we do with the stinking old porpoise?" he said.

"Throw it overboard," mumbled Sydney, still holding his nose.

This they did between them and "stinking old porpoise" became a joking expression with them afterwards.

Later they discovered whom the car belonged to. The owner had caught the porpoise, slung it into the back seat of his car, been called away to London and quite forgotten it. This was several days ago. Hence the mysterious and devastating smell which Tes had traced to its source.

Sydney and Tes were up the whole night before the race to perfect every detail. At the last minute a cylinder in one of the machines had to be changed. They had to receive reports, take in weather bulletins and make all kinds of notes. I seldom saw either Tes or Sydney these days, they were so overworked but enjoying it all hugely, and so I wasn't allowed to grumble.

During the race Tes came on board *Karen* to watch and make all the recordings. The yacht had been made the Commander's Flagship—the first

and only time the flag of the Chief of the Air Staff has been flown on a private yacht. She also flew the ensign of the Royal Air Force. The Prince of Wales watched the race from Sir Henry Segrave's *White Cloud*.

The British team consisted of Flying-Officer H. R. D. Waghorn, Flight-Lieutenant D'Arcy-Grieg, Flying-Officer Atcherley, and Flight-Lieutenant Stainforth in reserve. Flying-Officer Waghorn was first and so retained the trophy for Great Britain. He reached over 300 m.p.h. with an S6 Supermarine Rolls-Royce seaplane. Warrant-Officer Del Molen won the second place for Italy on his Macchi-Fiat 52 ; his greatest speed being over 284 m.p.h. Atcherley, who set up a world's speed record of 357 m.p.h. on his fourth lap, was, by a stroke of extremely bad luck, disqualified for not rounding the pylon at Bembridge.

The race not only proved that we had the best pilots but also by far the best seaplanes. The winning machine was designed by R. J. Mitchell and the engine by Henry Royce. Lieutenant Monti of the Italian team was forced down on his second lap as he was scalded by hot oil from a broken feed. Exhaust fumes forced his colleague, Lieutenant Cadringer, to descend in a semi-conscious condition.

That night there was an official dinner on the S.S. *Orford*, which was the headquarters of the Royal Aero Club, to which Sydney went. Tes spent the evening on board *Karen*, which was

anchored near the *Orford* and among numerous other private yachts.

Motor-boats scurried across the water here, there and everywhere. One of them was *Misconduct*, which Gordon Selfridge, junior, had placed at the disposal of the Schneider Committee. Gordon got to know Tes, who went out on *Misconduct* several times. She was a beautifully designed, very fast boat. Unluckily, a short time later, she was destroyed in a fire at Scott Paine's yard. Another acquaintance Tes made at Calshot, who was to mean something to him afterwards, was Group-Captain Orlebar, a pilot of great skill who is always known in the R.A.F. as "Orly." Tes grew to admire him very much and they became firm friends.

At last everything was over and we all went back to Mount Batten by car. A few days later *Karen* came in with the *Biscuit* swung on board. She was lowered into the water and Tes—her proud owner—drove her in state to her new home.

## XII

THE *Biscuit's* engine was not in good working order when she arrived at Mount Batten. Certain important parts needed replacing and as they were only to be had from her makers in America it would take some time to get them. In the meantime Tes scraped and repainted her hull and entirely took her engine to pieces. He was determined to have every detail of motor-boat construction at his finger-tips, and this keenness on what was really a hobby had, as I have said before, important and useful results afterwards for both the R.A.F. and the Navy.

In due course the new spare parts arrived from America. Working with his fellow aircraftmen, particularly his friend Corporal Evans, Tes re-assembled the engine and put it back into place. There was great excitement when, after her meticulous overhaul, the *Biscuit* once more took the water. The engine started up easily and to my inexperienced ear seemed to run beautifully. But Tes was not satisfied with her and continually hauled her out of the water to make some adjustment or other. Only perfection would do for him.

Eventually he announced that he was satisfied



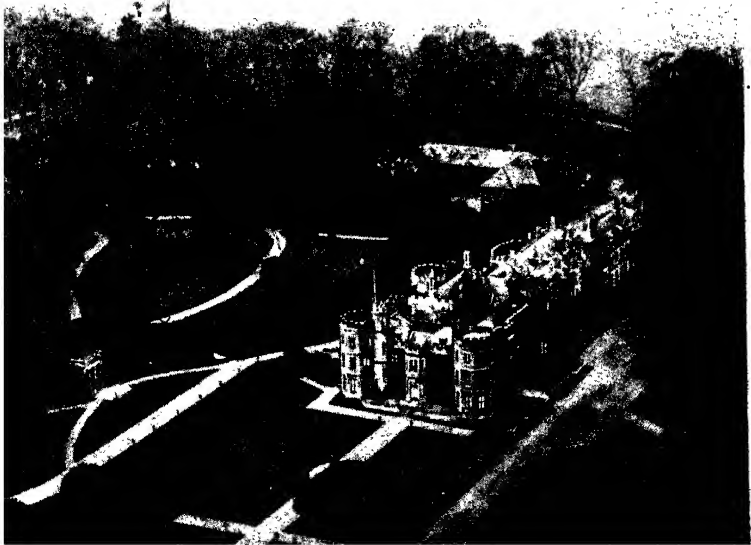
ON BOARD U.S.S. NORFOLK





AFTER A RUN IN THE *BISCUIT*

MOUNT EDGCUMBE



and the great day for launching had arrived. It was a pleasant, sunny morning ; the water was calm and blue, and nearly the whole station went down to the breakwater for the event. The motor-crane was driven to the shed ; her majesty the *Biscuit* was swung on to her and slowly they proceeded along the jetty. Then she was lowered very carefully over the side.

Would she go ? The Commanding Officer, officers, sergeants, corporals, aircraftmen—all stood by in eager groups watching the long-awaited launching. Lily, Squeak, the dogs and I were all there too. Beaming, Tes settled himself at the wheel with Corporal Evans beside him ; pressed the button, accelerated, and with a roar she was off. Turning and twisting, she was a flash of silver in the blue water. Never have I seen such antics from a speed-boat. Tes turned her round in her own length and showed her off like a small boy with an exciting toy.

At first he kept her in a creek in the rocks, which he lined with old rubber tyres to act as fenders and to save his paintwork. But soon he found this was not a very satisfactory arrangement. At low tide it was difficult to bring his craft alongside, and after a while she always took and left the water by means of a motor-crane. Later Sydney developed this creek into a large dock for service motor-boats, he and Tes working together on it for some time. Tes told us it was laughingly called by the troops : “ Sydney’s Folly.”

Strangely enough I had always disliked speed and speed-boats, and one day I said to him : " Yes, it's lovely for you, but you'll never persuade *me* to go out in the *Biscuit*."

" We shall see about that," he answered enigmatically. For some time he had been secretly determined I should both go out in her and enjoy it.

Not long after, Sydney and I were asked to take him to see the Mount Edgcumbe twelfth-century manor-house at Cotehele by the river Tamar and near St. Dominick in Cornwall. Tes was very keen to do this as archæology was still a passion with him and any period houses interested him tremendously. Also he knew Lady Mount Edgcumbe and liked her quiet gentle manner.

It was arranged that we should all go up the river in Lord Mount Edgcumbe's motor-launch. Unfortunately, the day before I developed a bad cold and cough and it seemed as if I should be unable to go. Tes was very disappointed and came in to see me that evening. He suggested the drastic remedy of my taking my first trip in the *Biscuit* to Cotehele instead of going—or not going!—in the motor-launch. He said : " It won't take you as long and so it will be better for you."

I was so surprised that I found myself agreeing, provided I really felt up to it next day. Of course I went. Tes promised he would go very slowly and pilot the *Biscuit* as quietly as I liked.

The morning was not very fine and the sea rather rough. But having made up our minds to go

nothing would deter us. We started about twelve—the others having left some time before as it would take them longer in the motor-launch. I must admit my feelings were a little mixed when I first got into the *Biscuit*. But I didn't say anything about it, and Tes chattering on about what a pleasant sensation it was to go along in the water soon made me forget my slight nervousness. I settled down—to my astonishment I must admit—and enjoyed it thoroughly. We went at a fairly high speed until we came to the mouth of the Tamar. Here, between the pine trees and the meadows running down to the river's edge, there was a beauty and a serenity which neither of us wanted to spoil, so we throttled down.

"When there's beautiful scenery it isn't the time to speed," said Tes; so whenever we nosed our way into the Tamar or some other equally lovely river we always ambled quietly along.

The journey was uneventful and we arrived at our destination punctually—my cold of yesterday completely forgotten.

After lunch we were taken over the house and Tes was very interested in all the treasures it held—in fact he told Lady Mount Edgcumbe that he was sure she couldn't know half of the things that were in it. She quite agreed, and he astounded us by picking up various treasures and telling us their date and where they had come from.

In one of the bedrooms he suddenly called a halt. "What have you got here?" he asked. Going

over to a corner of the room he moved an ordinary hip-bath and gently, almost with reverence, turned over a small, dull-looking rug on which the bath had been standing.

"Do you know what this is?" he said in a rather shocked voice.

"No, I've no idea."

"As far as I can tell it's one of four hunting rugs—the date of which I can't remember—but if it is, there are only three others in the world!"

Lady Mount Edgcumbe was tremendously interested and consulted a museum authority soon afterwards. He was perfectly right, and needless to say the bath did *not* stand on the rug again.

We all had tea and then started off home. Tes suggested that this time I should pilot the *Biscuit*, and the next thing I knew was that I was sitting at the helm with Tes beside me, an expression of quiet triumph on his face.

He showed me all the workings of the boat; how to steer her, how to slow down and so forth. As I had driven a car for some time this was not as difficult as I imagined. At full speed the *Biscuit* was fairly easy to handle; her nose went down and one could look over it at the water ahead; but to slow down and come up alongside a landing-stage was not so easy.

Tes was most encouraging and never for a moment doubted my ability to drive. This of course gave me just the confidence I needed. I must admit that my first experience of driving a

speed-boat was one of the most thrilling things I have ever done. My pleasure pleased him and we were like a couple of children together.

After this I was able to take the *Biscuit* out by myself, but I was not allowed to go beyond sight of Mount Batten as the engine was too intricate for anyone but a complete expert to tackle and the electrical mechanism often needed minor adjustments. Moreover, she had a nasty way of trying to catch fire—the ever-present bugbear of all spirit-driven craft either in the air or on the water. It was strange how any fears melted into thin air when I was with Tes. He seemed to inspire confidence, not only in himself, but in one's own self as well. Squeak says just the same. He sometimes took her out in the *Biscuit* and let her take the wheel, even though she was a child, and she never felt in the least nervous when she was with him.

Bit by bit Tes improved the *Biscuit* in various small ways. One thing he did was to fit a motor-car head-lamp near the bow so that he could drive her at full speed in the dark reasonably safely. I say "reasonably safely" because he never wanted complete safety or ease in any form in his life. And it was not possible to be completely safe in the Sound because of its many dangerous rocks, or in the harbour where debris often floated about that would be capable of overturning the *Biscuit*. And outside the Sound the English Channel held its own special dangers for what was not, after all, a sea-going craft.

### XIII

THE normal simple home life of Mount Batten gradually healed Tes of his self-consciousness and many fears. There he could, he said, "be peaceful and quiet and pure." Moreover, he gradually discovered the mechanical side of his nature and through it found contentment in good work well done and a respite from restless thinking. As I have said before, whatever he undertook to do he would master in the end. He grew more and more at ease and the nervous tension in him—the result of his extraordinary experiences as a young man and his disillusionment and exhaustion after the Arabian campaign—slackened and he relaxed.

His friendship for Sydney ripened in their mutual appreciation of each other's characters and abilities. Tes said one day to a friend of ours who often stayed in the house : " Sydney is a wonderful man."

" Why ? "

" He has such an open mind. Nothing comes to his notice but he examines it carefully—that's unusual in the Services."

Sydney's affection for Tes was in its way as deep as my own, and we all became a very happy family.

I sometimes wondered how it was that Tes liked so obviously to be with an ordinary person like myself, but he used to say "water finds its own level"—whatever that means. I took care never to exact or demand anything from him as I knew instinctively that he would resent it and try to escape. He must always be perfectly free—free to give what he wanted and free to live and think as he liked. Clinging affection or possessiveness would have been abhorrent to him. Like the wind he must be free to come and go as he wished.

When he felt like it he came in to dinner and spent the evening with us. Soon he discovered that I loved music too, especially chamber music, and as we only had a portable gramophone which was not good for string tone he suggested he should instal his own electric gramophone in our house.

The very next day it arrived. Tes fixed it up and we spent that evening playing our favourite records. We found we both liked the slow movements of symphonies best, and sometimes we played the slow movement of the Rachmaninoff Concerto over and over again. Since his death I can never bear to listen to it and always walk out of the room if it's being played.

One thing we disagreed upon. I hate Bach's music, while he enjoyed it. Otherwise our tastes in music were largely alike.

Although I was fond of singing *lieder*—Schubert and Brahms—I had never learned German, and

Tes promptly took my pronunciation in hand. He could speak German as well as French and he taught me the songs of Delius and Wolf as well as other *lieder* I had not sung before. He especially liked me to sing Schumann's *Cycle of a Woman's Life*. I also learned some of Grieg's songs, but Tes did not care very much for his music. People told me afterwards that my German accent was perfect when I sang. If so, it was entirely due to his coaching. Wolf was his favourite song writer; *Verschwiegene Liebe* his favourite song.

He liked different composers at different times. He knew Elgar personally and admired his music, especially the *Enigma Variations*, but he told me that for him Beethoven held the quintessence of all the composers. One composer might be "meat," another "drink," but Beethoven was meat and drink and "completely satisfying."

Sydney is not musical, and if Tes came in when he was there they would begin to talk shop—flying-boats or the building of a dock—till at last I had to seem really cross and ask when we could have some music. Tes would say at once: "Clare's right; no more shop," and he would go and put on a record. Sydney, knowing if he dared interrupt he would be given a fierce look, usually went out then to the Officers' Mess and—as he said—"left us to it."

Our sitting-room overlooked the estuary of the Cattewater. Little ferry-boats with twinkling red and green lights would glide smoothly past, and

everything was very still and peaceful. Tes sat on the sofa leaning forward listening to the music, hand on mouth, elbow on knee. He didn't just *hear* the music; he really listened. It was an intellectual as well as an emotional experience for him. Neither of us dreamed of saying a word, and at the end of the record he would get up very quietly, change it for another and deal with the needle—all with the most loving care and as if it were almost a religious rite.

Sometimes we found we had been listening together for two or three hours in perfect unity and a companionship that made words superfluous, and when Sydney got back from the Mess he would be surprised to "find us still at it," as he called it. Tes would then say good night to us both and go off to his barrack hut to sleep.

Music and its spell-binding effect on him was something he could never really explain. He tried to once, but could only say it was magic, and like speed it set him free from thinking, but he didn't know how or why. He liked to change the mood and if we had been listening to something sad he would put on a light, gay record afterwards. At other times he'd get a devil in him and insist on playing some extremely modern thing which gave him a mischievous look. One evening a woman dropped in who had a harsh, grating voice. "Do go on with the music, Mr. Shaw," she said as she sat down. But the spell was broken; Tes became hard and closed up like a clam and simply refused.

It was an awkward moment, but I was in full sympathy with him.

The only other person sharing these evenings of music with us who fitted in perfectly was my friend, Mrs. Galpin, or "Pippin." Tes enjoyed joking with her, and teasing her, and was always absolutely at ease with her. She, too, noticed his almost uncanny gift of knowing what one was thinking about and carrying on the thread with an apparently unrelated remark.

For instance, one day he joined us both for dinner and she found herself looking at his work-stained hands and thinking : " He really ought to have taken more trouble to clean up before he came here." At that moment he smiled mischievously at her, held up his hands, looked at them and made a face of disgust, saying : " Yes, they are shameful—but I had no time . . ."

Another day at lunch we three idly talked about a shoal of porpoises which had appeared in the Sound soon after we had been bathing. Pippin said : " Oh, how I should hate to be hit by a porpoise while I was swimming ! "

Tes replied : " Yes, if you were hit in the tummy you would sink like a stone." It was just where her own train of thought had led her to—much to her amused astonishment.

Although he was mischievous—if he didn't like people he would almost delight in annoying and discomforting them—he was never unkind. Practical jokes he disliked, but he enjoyed pulling people's

legs—and so does Sydney. One evening he and Tes played an amusing and perfectly harmless joke which amused us vastly.

At night, airmen of the Marine Section (to which Tes belonged) had to put up riding-lights on the flying-boats. When this was done they landed at the jetty in front of "The Fisherman's Arms," tied up their dinghy at the steps, and marched past our windows to their huts. This evening when we saw them coming, Sydney and Tes decided to play a trick on them. Taking a large electric bulb from one of our own lights they knelt down by the window-seat and as the party passed underneath quietly dropped the bulb just behind them. Of course it went off with a bang! The airmen jumped and stopped dead, looking round everywhere to see where the noise had come from. The two figures at the window remained carefully invisible, convulsed with laughter. Nothing was ever said about the joke and to this day I am sure the airmen never realized a prank had been played upon them by their Commanding Officer and the so-called "mystery man of the world"—"Colonel Lawrence"!

## XIV

I soon discovered that the *Biscuit* was just what Tes said of her—"one of those tricky crafts that demand constant attention like an exacting female." He was always having to haul her up for slight repairs and adjustments, but when she took to the water she behaved beautifully.

Painted silver with a narrow blue line, she flashed about the Sound and gave Tes more pleasure than anything else had ever given him.

His craving for speed was doubly satisfied, by the *Biscuit* and his motor-cycle; this craving which finally brought about his death. While speeding he could think of nothing else but the sensation of rushing air or water and controlling the machine that carried him. To him, therefore, speed was rest, as it is to many people nowadays, and through it he escaped from his many conflicting selves. He never ran away from death, but at times his impulse was to run away from life.

Very often I said to him: "You'll kill yourself on your motor-bicycle!"

He would laugh and reply: "Oh, I'm always so careful."

Long afterwards, when I had returned from

Singapore, and this prophecy, so tragically, had come true, I went down to Camberley and paid a visit to a hairdresser, Mr. Wellard, whom I used to go to when we were stationed there.

"Do you remember years ago," he said, "when you gave me the privilege of shaking hands with Mr. Shaw—you were on your way down from London to Plymouth—that you said to me: 'Mr. Wellard, I know he will kill himself on his motor-cycle one day.'?"

Of course he didn't actually kill himself; not deliberately, that is, but his death was due to the speed at which he was riding when he swerved to avoid the two boys.

One of Sydney's strongest recollections of him is his sudden appearance some evenings at "The Fisherman's Arms" carrying cap and goggles and evidently having just alighted from a long ride.

"Where have you been, Tes?"

"Oh . . . just got back from Town . . ."

Then passing his fingers through the wisp of hair on the front of his fair head and sitting down he would add laconically . . . "Did it in ten minutes less to-day. Left London at four and posted a letter at . . ." (mentioning a time which no ordinary person could possibly have done it in), evidently as pleased as Punch to have beaten his own record. Yet he was never "had up" for dangerous driving or speeding and was at the same time very careful and steady-going through towns

and villages. But he made up for them all right on open stretches of road !

Threading his fingers through this plume of hair, which simply wouldn't lie down as he never used anything but water on it, was such a characteristic gesture of his that the one and only time I ever saw it smoothed down flat I had quite a shock. Some months after his arrival at Mount Batten I dreamed a curious dream about it. Tes came to see me with his hair brushed flat to his head and smarmed down with oil.

The next morning I was sitting writing when the door opened and in walked Tes, with his hair exactly as I had seen it in my dream ! The effect was extraordinary and for the moment it took my breath away as it completely altered the shape of his face. I told him about my dream and he roared with laughter, saying that the explanation was a completely mundane one. He'd been working underneath the *Biscuit*, the oil from the engine had dripped on to his head and he'd had no time to wash it out !

He was always matter of fact about himself and hated "fussing." One day he broke a couple of ribs—I've forgotten how—and said nothing about it to anyone. Sydney and I could see he was in pain, but he refused to make any change in his ordinary life because of it. As I was going to fetch Pippin he said to me, laughing : " You'll need a shoe-horn to fit me into the car ! " But this didn't stop him from coming too.

I had asked him to make a few purchases for me in Plymouth, if he was going there, and now he took the opportunity of having Pippin with him to get her to do my commissions for me. Apparently he asked her very shyly if she would mind "buying Clare's complexion" for him, meaning the Face Cream I had asked for from Boots. She teased him tremendously for having such a job to do for me, and in spite of his broken ribs, Tes had to laugh—which must have been very painful.

## XV

THE next day he was obviously still in pain and Sydney suggested that I should take him away somewhere for the day as he needed a rest. We packed our basket with tea and supper, got out the *Biscuit* and set out for a trip which I shall describe in detail as it was typical of so many lovely days and picnics we had together.

It was a beautiful, early summer Devonshire morning with a cloudless blue sky. The water, he said, reminded him of an opal ; its depths had so many differently coloured currents and under-currents.

We loaded up ; I pressed the button of the self-starter—would she go or not ? There was always a doubt, which only added to the fun of the thing. To-day she responded like a bird and we were soon away, leaving the landing-stage opposite the front door of “ The Fisherman’s Arms ” with her silver nose high in the air. But as we gathered speed her nose went down almost to water-level and we could look ahead along her deck.

On we sped ; flashing past flying-boats riding at anchor, past the Barbican, and the Hoe from which Raleigh and Drake had started out on their adven-

tures, past Mount Edgcumbe, where we waved a friendly greeting to the keeper at the ferry—on and on, faster and faster. We laughed and said we felt like a pair of race-horses sniffing the air!

We passed Devonport Docks, then rushed by the Monitor *Erebus* and then by a fleet of rusty-looking and neglected ships lying idle for lack of cargo—on and on we sped till we came to the mouth of the Lynher river.

Now was the time to throttle down because we wanted to give ourselves up to really enjoying the lovely scenery. Although the *Biscuit* had such a high speed she could go slowly and quietly as well and we could hear ourselves talk, which was impossible when she was full out.

This particular reach of the Lynher is perfect. On one side it is bounded by a mass of larches and pines gradually sloping down to the river, their colours varying from dark green, almost black, to the pale jade and bright green of new tender shoots. On the other bank there are grassy meadows rising into hills. But for all her beauty the Lynher is treacherous and Tes knew he must navigate very carefully. At the very moment we were discussing the best course to take we came upon a big, slow barge called the *Mary Ann* making her deliberate way upstream.

We decided she was a godsend, and that we would follow her closely, winding in and out with her as evidently she knew the tricky course of the river well. Soon we came to a wide expanse of water

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

into which flow various small tributaries of the Lynher, one of which winds its way down to St. Germans.

Groups of small tufted duck, with sleek coats of white, black and shimmering green, followed by families of tiny yellow babies, were busy in the rushy marsh at the river's edge. The appearance of a big, silver, fish-like object amongst them caused alarm and astonishment and they hastily dived below the surface and popped up like corks a few yards farther on. We found them both charming and funny and were as happy as they.

Soon the *Mary Ann* reached her destination—a large quarry where she loaded up with limestone and chalk. Later we used this quarry on wet days and Tes called it our “summer residence.” We found a rather tumbledown old bungalow in it, with a veranda which sloped down to the water, and on this we sat and picnicked when it rained.

Beyond this the river grew narrow and overgrown; we decided to go no farther. But to retrace our course without our pilot was not so easy. I refused to worry; the day was too lovely and I felt sure Tes's remarkable memory would lead us safely back home again.

Looking for a place in which to have supper we found another quarry, far more beautiful than the first as it was long disused and its white scars were covered with grass and wild flowers. Crowning the ridge were tall, purplish-pink foxgloves and red and white valerian, the slopes were covered with

gorse and the hollow was yellow with kingcups and buttercups. We felt this was an ideal place. Tes loved wild flowers as much as I, and he enjoyed picking them. I hardly dared to admire a flower growing on a cliff top or some other dangerous place or he would at once start climbing to get it.

The next question was tying up the *Biscuit*. As pilot I slowly pushed her nose in towards the bank and put her into neutral. Tes jumped out with his usual agility and took hold of the painter ; then he found a rough stake which he drove into the ground on landing. The *Biscuit* was moored. We threw out basket, rugs and boat-seats and carried them a few yards inland where we made our camp on an exquisite carpet of moss and little creeping wild flowers. Then we had our supper. Tes liked fruit very much and was very fond of oranges cut up and put in a thermos which he called "potted sunshine."

The opposite bank of the river formed a gentle slope on which a flock of sheep grazed quietly, the sun behind them casting queer distorted shadows on the soft green turf. To our right, spanning the river, was a graceful grey-stone viaduct. Suddenly, shattering the perfect quiet, the Cornish express rushed madly across with such a rattle and a scream that we both jumped.

When it had gone the mood of perfect calm settled down and enfolded us again. We hardly spoke. Tes lay back, completely relaxed, drinking in the scene. Lights and shadows made strangely shaped

and beautiful contrasts. Occasionally a coot or moor-hen called to her mate. Twice a heron rose from his fishing and, flying low, looked like a phantom in the twilight . . .

The twilight faded away and night stole upon us. It grew dark and chilly, we had lost all sense of time and now discovered that we had left our departure rather late. The tide had turned and if we couldn't get past the St. Germans bend before it ebbed much more we should probably have a long wait. We clambered quickly into the *Biscuit*, throwing in cushions and picnic things, and made off, with Tes at the wheel.

Risk and uncertainty were what he revelled in and the trip now seemed to be turning out highly uncertain. We felt our way along gingerly with the river gleaming a steely blue, with frogs croaking and the engine purring softly. All seemed well, but we knew there was difficult navigation ahead. In daylight and with the *Mary Ann* to guide us it had looked comparatively simple, but with the tide dropping and countless humps of soft, wet shiny mud showing, it was not so easy. We took a turn—and quietly slid on to a nice large mud bank, which looked as if it should have a crocodile basking on it, and stuck fast! As we did so a far-away band, from the direction of St. Germans, struck up *God Save The King*.

How we laughed!

Nevertheless it was really no laughing matter. We were stuck and only by a miracle or the rising

of the tide could we hope to reach Mount Batten before morning. Neither of us felt we wanted to spend the night under the stars in the cramped quarters of the *Biscuit*, nor did we feel our conversational powers could keep us going for so many hours.

Tes thought it might be possible for him to take off his boots, get out and pull her off, but prodding the mud we decided it was much too soft and that he would only sink in. So there we had to stay. A lovely, round red moon rose to cheer us and we settled down to wait patiently for the incoming tide. Luck was with us. The tide was a particularly short one ; in a few hours it rose to our sides and in another half-hour we were afloat.

We glided off our over-hospitable mud bank and carefully picked our way downstream. The rest of the river journey was uneventful and before long we were in deep water, throttle open, skimming over the surface. In our quiet harbour there were no signs of life ; it was the early hours of the morning but no one had been anxious. Everybody, including Sydney, had such confidence in Tes that they didn't dream of worrying.

Later I asked Tes how much we had done and where we had got to. He sent me this little note :

Our trip last night was just 13 miles ; up the Lynher (St. Germans, where the band played *God Save The King*, is on the Tiddy) to Poldrissick, where the mine was. So it was not so far as Cotehele. To-day they are running the Derby, and

THE GOLDEN REIGN

it will be "on" in our hut between 2.30 and 3, for anyone who wishes to hear. If the weather is fine there is a rather cleaner grass bank outside the windows as an alternative position. T. E. S.

## XVI

WE went for many picnic trips in the *Biscuit* and I recall little incidents that occurred on them to show the ordinary sort of life that Tes really loved, and how absurd it was that so much mystery should have attached itself to him and to his doings.

We decided one morning to explore the Tiddy—a narrow little stream—beyond St. Germans, where one had to watch the tide very closely. As we passed the St. Germans landing-stage we were hailed from the steps. There stood the keeper and his wife, a pleasant pair of typical Cornish people, with their little girl. “Perhaps they want a match,” said Tes, “or for us to post a letter for them in Plymouth . . . let’s go in and see . . .”

We drew up alongside and to our astonishment they handed him an autograph book and asked him to sign it. Recognizing “Lawrence of Arabia” they were determined not to lose this opportunity of getting his signature. Tes insisted I should write my name first, though we knew it wouldn’t mean much to them, and then he signed. They were delighted and thanked us profusely. Tes was charming to them as he always was to simple people, and didn’t mind this little incident

in the least. Always after this we got a friendly wave and a greeting whenever we passed the little landing-stage.

We went on upstream. Here the river narrows still more, becoming almost a rivulet, and as we went on and on I wondered if Tes ever meant to stop. But with a grin of mischief he carried on, with branches slapping and brushing us in the face and banks almost touching the sides of the boat. He was thoroughly enjoying it, and not for the world would I let him know that I should infinitely have preferred to have turned some way back! But at each corner he felt he must see what was round the next . . . Finally, peering round the last corner, even he had to admit that it would be quite impossible to go any farther. The stream was overhung and choked with weeds.

We tied up alongside a bank under a curtain of weeping willows, landed our rugs and other impedimenta and sat down for a morning's lazy time. Tes took up my copy of *Vogue* and commented on its advertisements so comically that I had to roar with laughter. He read out the greatest nonsense and made the most ordinary advertisement sound fantastic. If only I had taken a snap of the mystery-man, Colonel Lawrence, reading *Vogue* on the bank of the Tiddy! It would have made a grand advertisement!

We basked like lizards in the sunshine and must have been engrossed in our reading, as the next thing either of us knew was an unpleasant sensation

of wet feet. The tide had quietly risen and was lapping over them, and we were marooned ! Well beyond our reach the *Biscuit* at her moorings was bobbing about in the middle of the stream, and all we could do was to move farther inland where it was dry and wait till the tide turned, the water dropped, and we were able to reach her.

This time it didn't matter a bit as it was morning and we had the whole day in front of us. With true Swiss Family Robinson cunning Tes improvised a drying rail out of branches to hang our wet shoes and stockings on, and we settled down to a leisurely lunch and read. Time didn't exist when one was with him, and it seemed quite a short spell until the water receded enough for us to get back into the *Biscuit* and make our way downstream again, bound for home.

When we arrived, feeling pleased with ourselves for no special reason and expecting a welcome, I found myself suddenly overwhelmed with reproaches from my sister-in-law, Patty Edelston. I was taken aback ; then horrified to hear I had totally forgotten that a very senior Naval Officer and his wife had been expected for lunch ! When they duly turned up there was neither hostess nor food ! Luckily Patty and Sydney rose magnificently to the occasion. Patty made all kinds of excuses for me, while Sydney surreptitiously sent over to the Officers' Mess for hot food. Needless to say I was teased unmercifully for my lapse of memory and Tes was tremendously amused.

I believe it was on this same picnic that Tes collected me a huge bunch of tall foxgloves from our quarry to put in a particular high, blue glass vase we both liked. Sydney says he will never forget the rather comic sight of his small figure staggering up the breakwater to "The Fisherman's Arms," almost completely hidden by the flowers.

This vase always presented a difficulty, as it was so big that it was hard to find enough long flowers to go in it. Tes enjoyed trying to get them, even under stress of climbing cliffs or getting torn with brambles. One day I asked him to go out into the garden and pick some long, bright red dahlias for it. I had taken great trouble to grow these special giant dahlias, so you can imagine my horror when he reappeared soon after, bearing the complete plants—roots and all! They looked glorious in the blue vase, but next year we had no dahlias.

Red was one of Tes's favourite colours, especially for flowers. He liked "a splash of colour on the walls" he used to say. But much as he loved flowers he was no gardener. If I were busy in the garden he would stroll over, hands in pockets, and just stand around and watch. "I like to see other people working," he'd chuckle, and I don't remember that he ever offered to help—except one day when Axworthy, the gardener, unearthed a skeleton while he was digging a hole in which to plant a tree. That excited Tes's old archæological fervour and he and Sydney took infinite pains to get all the pieces out intact and to examine them minutely.

They discovered that this part of the peninsula had been used as a cemetery in the Middle Ages when plague had swept Plymouth. They told me of their find as jubilant as a pair of schoolboys, but I was horrified that they should have disturbed the bones from their age-old bed and made them put them all back and re-bury them. Although I was chaffed for my "squeamishness" they obeyed me.

This and the dahlia episode were the only two occasions on which Tes took an active and practical interest in my cherished garden !

## XVII

DURING Tes's first year at Mount Batten I was hardly ever away from home, so I had no letters from him—only little notes sent over from his office above the Workshops. In this year he lost his self-consciousness and much of his nervousness and became a more integrated personality, able to enjoy the simple things of life and less tortured by doubt and by thought.

He loved, when I knew him, the composition of a view and the atmosphere that a particular day's combination of cloud and sunlight created. He could sit and lose himself in music for hours at a time ; he was fulfilled and happy in his work, and he met people naturally—drawing them out if they were simple and inarticulate, teasing them if they took themselves over-solemnly, pricking the bubble of their self-importance with some acute words spoken in an innocent voice with his chin in air and an amused smile lurking at the corners of his mouth, contracting and hiding in a shell of silence and withdrawal if they jarred or grated on his sensibilities, talking with animation and conviction if they were people of his own calibre of brain and achievement—and holding such an audience in a

web of interest at his talk and personality, the Irishman in him thoroughly revelling in holding his audience and winning its approval.

Except for the *Odyssey* he was doing no writing. Once he said to me . . . "I am a poet—but somehow I don't want to express myself in that form : the business of living is too big and too absorbing."

He wrote letters to his friends, but even they had become shorter, terser, more matter-of-fact than—for instance—when he was at Wool and in the Tank Corps. It showed he was happier, I think. He no longer needed to pour out himself and all his torturing thoughts on paper as he had had to then. "There is no sense of excitement or sparkle," he said of that time at Bovington Camp; and he reacted violently against the animality of the men who, he said, were not filled with any sense of adventure as were the men in the R.A.F., and as compensation were almost brutish in their pleasures and appetites.

"I get in denial the gratification they get in indulgence. I react against their example with an abstinence even more rigorous than of old."

Here at Mount Batten, among a different type of man, and entering into our home and family life, he lost all that sense of strain and disgust at certain sides of life that he expressed in his letters from Wool. The letters he wrote from Mount Batten were different altogether. Writing to me he gave me the little family news and details and jokes that he knew I should be longing to hear ; details which mean so much to someone away from home.

Sydney was ordered to Reykjavik for the thousandth anniversary celebrations of the Icelandic Parliament on July 1st, 1930. Two flying-boats were going, with Sydney in charge, while the *Renown* represented our Navy. Towards the end of June he started out in one of the flying-boats, but feeling very ill he was landed hurriedly at Stornoway with an acute attack of appendicitis. After a week in the local hospital he was taken south again to the R.A.F. hospital in Uxbridge and operated on.

As soon as I heard he was on his way to Uxbridge, I hurried up to London to be near him. Laila Stanley Smith, whom I first knew in Cairo before her marriage, let me stay with her, and I went down to Uxbridge every day. It was the first time I had been away from Mount Batten and it was then that I received the first letter I ever had from Tes.

16.vii.30.

This is not a letter, but a line, to say that everybody is glad the operation went well. We got messages about it to-day from Coastal Area.

It was as well that Biffy did not come. The afternoon has been stormy, like all the recent days, and now it is going to rain again.

The *Biscuit* sits in the shed ; the engine is finished (not very satisfactory. She will not be much faster than she was : but she should last a long time. I hope we have cured the oil leaks and the water-leak. There is so much rough workmanship in her) but

not installed and I will wait for the new coupling. Then she can be lined up properly and will do for a long autumn of running, let's hope.

The camp is quiet and we have not been troubled : only the bad weather and all the work on the boat and the general feeling of something wrong makes things dull. The dogs walk about happily with the Adjutant and visit here almost every day. Here is the office.

The Admiral sent the news on yesterday afternoon to Squeak. He flew to Falmouth that afternoon in the Iris.

T. E. S.

Do not take Graves' book <sup>1</sup> as very true ! It is quite superficial really. It would be hard, in writing of a little-known but reputed figure not to dramatize one's subject a bit.

They used to call me T. E. L. Then I threw away the L. They were not certain that it would remain S. So it became just TE, for safety's sake.

T. E. S.

The reference to " Graves' book " is that I had written to tell him I was astonished to read in it that he did not like women and children and asked him if it were really true.

As soon as Sydney was pronounced well enough to be moved he went to Barnwell Castle in Northamptonshire (now owned by H.R.H. the Duke of

<sup>1</sup> *Lawrence and the Arabs.*

Gloucester) to convalesce with the Colin Coopers. I decided to go home for a few days, and Tes very kindly came up to fetch me and keep me company on the long drive down to Plymouth. He met Laila Stanley Smith and liked her very much, in spite of the fact that her father, Izzet Pasha, was a staunch and prominent supporter of the second-last Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II—a deadly enemy of “Lawrence of Arabia” who had deprived him of a large slice of his empire.

We enjoyed the drive down together and Tes had evidently missed me at Mount Batten. I was so delighted to get back that I realized suddenly what it meant to me. It was home—and home is a precious luxury in the Services where one is always being moved about and lives a kind of Bedouin existence.

Tes seemed to have spent most of his time getting the gramophone and the *Biscuit* in perfect running order. A day or two later I had a telephone message from Sydney himself saying that he felt much better. I was so happy that I sent a note down to tell Tes, and a reply came by return :

‘ I’ll come in after dinner, if I may (about 8–8.30). After getting more Homer out of my way. The wet afternoon prompts me to work. If it is fine we might take an hour on the water (work must wait !). If wet, some music. I’m glad he rang up. Details when we meet.

T. E. S.

It turned into a fine evening, I remember, and we had a beautiful hour or two on the water ; Tes very proud that his work on the *Biscuit* had been so effective. She went like a bird.

A week after, Sydney was well enough to come home. The Coopers had been wanting to have Tes for a week-end for some time, and so this seemed a good opportunity. Barnwell Castle was 350 miles off, so we had to start very early in the morning. The weather was perfect and the country lovely—I believe it was the best run we ever had together. Because of an incident that happened on the way Tes opened up more than he ever did before or since, and tried to analyse himself and his relations with life in general.

We stopped at Lionel Curtis's house, as he was one of Tes's greatest friends, but unfortunately he was out. Our next stop was for lunch with the Philip du Cros's at Bulidge Manor near Chippenham. It was here that the incident occurred which affected him so much.

At lunch Mrs. du Cros said to me : " We have a young governess for our children staying in the house : do you think Mr. Shaw would just shake hands with her ? She says it would be the greatest thing that could ever happen to her if he would."

After lunch, when we were all sitting having coffee, the little governess came down the stairs towards us shyly. She was very young and fair and timid, and Tes, being shy himself, understood what she felt, so he got up and went to meet her—at once

putting her at her ease with his smile and air of kindness. Although he hated shaking hands he did it gladly in this case. She said a word or two, very quietly, and went back to the schoolroom again, having had her desire.

This made a very deep impression on him. As soon as we were on the road and alone again he began to talk about it as if he were thinking aloud. "Isn't it queer? There's that young girl . . . never seen me before . . . hasn't even read *Seven Pillars* . . . doesn't really know much about me, but for reasons I shall never understand, she wanted to meet me and in some odd way will look on this as a red-letter day in her life."

This started him off talking about himself and his work, and he said in a puzzled way that it seemed as if he possessed something . . . he didn't know what exactly . . . some quality that he could turn "on or off like a tap" and which appealed to people. I knew what he meant because I have seen it hidden or at work so often. One day, for instance, he felt rather lost in a house-party, with no one there that he had anything in common with but myself, and just kept quiet and hidden. Afterwards our hostess said to me disappointedly: "I can't imagine what people see in your precious Colonel Lawrence . . . why, he's such a dull little man!"

But, on the other hand, at a certain dinner-party which included many well-known people, he was the centre of the conversation—and very interesting

conversation it was too—and our host told us that he had “never realized before what a brilliant and charming person Shaw is !”

We arrived at Barnwell Castle at last, very tired from our run, and found everyone in the drawing-room having cocktails. Sydney seemed much more like himself and said he was looking forward to coming home. After dinner a very amusing thing happened. Colin Cooper had a wonderful bathroom, which was his special hobby and pride. The huge bath had special mirrors round it which wouldn't blur with steam, and gold taps. We were all in evening dress, and like a child showing off his toys Colin, who is a very big man, got into the bath and sat down.

To my horror, looking at Tes's face, I saw his imp of mischief appear. “The World's Imp,” as Auda abu Tayi had called him, was going to do his worst. Quick as lightning, before Colin could get out, he turned on the gold taps ! Everyone roared with laughter, even the victim, whose evening clothes were *not* improved ! No one felt annoyed at Tes's escapades as he had a curiously disarming way with him.

Next morning we had a swim in the open-air pool. Colin thought he would get his own back by making Tes ride a big rubber sea horse, which was very slippery when blown up hard and difficult to ride in the water. Colin had had practice and could ride “Horace” (this was Tes's name for the creature) and thought Tes would fall off him at

once. But not Tes ; somehow he managed to sit Horace at once, and for longer than anyone else, Colin included. He enjoyed the fun hugely and bought another Horace for Mount Batten. Sydney, who wasn't well enough to swim, pointed out to me all the scars and bullet wounds on Tes's fair skin. There was hardly a place on his body that wasn't marked in this way. I shuddered to think of the close shaves he had come through.

Sydney wasn't well enough to travel back with us by car after all. It was very disappointing, but he came to Plymouth by train later in the week. I motored Tes to London, where he was going to see the rehearsal of *Private Lives*. He admired Noel's work as a dramatist and writer and knew him personally. He wrote his second letter to me from town, where, as usual, he stayed in Sir Herbert Baker's rooms in Westminster.

14, BARTON STREET,  
S.W.1.

*Thursday.*

We had two most excellent runs—and I like crossing England by road. So they go on the credit side.

As for going back by train—that is a thing I often do. No novelty, yet certainly no penalty : and I could not well stay in London till Tuesday. Probably I would get into trouble before that.

Yesterday lunched with Philip Sassoon and Noel Coward, and went on to a rehearsal of a new play.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

*That* would be considered a bit above myself by Lord T.

While at Cranwell I had to refrain from saying "Biffy" to my Commanding Officer : so I try, at Mount Batten, not to get into the habit of Sydney and Clare. Remember I have to say "W/Comdr. and Mrs. Smith" 50 times a day : and the crowd wouldn't like it if my tongue slipped ! That's the (very sensible) reason for being so foolishly formal !

Yours,

T. E. S.

Give Horace a rub with chalk, and my love, please.

## XVIII

WE often discussed going to a concert or theatre together, but somehow neither came off. Tes himself went to both occasionally, though he really preferred listening to music quietly in a room alone or with someone who was in sympathy with the music, rather than in a crowded concert hall. He had been particularly anxious to see *The Apple Cart* at the Malvern Festival in August, 1929, but Sydney hadn't been able to give him leave or to spare him from the intensive Schneider Cup preparations. He went the next year instead while I was staying at Laila's house in Regent's Park. Just before going he wrote this letter full of home news and gossip—about Squeak . . . and Horace, the rubber sea horse's Mount Batten brother . . . and the dogs—all the homely things which filled his life while—as he says with amusement—the papers were crediting him with playing a sinister part at the other ends of the earth !

15.viii.30.

I saw Squeak this afternoon. She was blooming but complained that solitary life was dull. To-day

she goes to tea with the Jones<sup>1</sup> family. She has not taken any of the officers to the pictures in Plymouth, because it is difficult to find a single one : meaning that they go in pairs, usually, and she feels not able to entertain two. I had planned to take her out to-morrow, but will not unless the weather is too wet for a sinful indulgence promised me by a millionaire.

Horace's brother is filling all Gregory's bed in hut VI and makes all the E. end of the hut look raffish. A very leering beast. It is rough windy wet and cold. So no water-sports to-day ! and to-morrow, with Sund. and part of Monday I shall (weather permitting) be absent. The *Biscuit* sits in her shed. Launch on Tuesday, perhaps, if the seas go down.

It was the other Iris<sup>2</sup> which failed to get off under extra load : not Mr. Maxton's.

The camp is peaceful. Everybody asks when you are coming home. I tell them Tuesday.

The dogs took luncheon off the Eleys, who had a picnic in the brake by the officers' tennis court. Leo saw to it that no food was left thrown about.

This goes to Regent's Park, though you will be in Cromwell Road. However, what's that !

In London I bought two or three rather nice records : smooth and quiet things. All strings.

<sup>1</sup> Squadron-Leader J. O. H. (" Peter ") and Mrs. Jones and their daughter Hermione ; now Group-Captain commanding the R.A.F. Station at Abbotsinch.

<sup>2</sup> Iris flying-boat.

The gramophone is still in the Fisherman's Arms.

T. E. S.

And on Wednesday I go to Malvern. Life is nearly as hectic as the newspapers make it. They swear I am revolting in Kurdistan.

He wrote again soon afterwards to catch me before I started back for home.

*Monday, 15th.*

This will get you before you start, I hope. Leo is excellently well, and in very good appetite. A little squarish biscuit called "custard creams" gives him a great deal of joy. So long as he gets occasional chocolates to breed variety. He runs all over the camp with me. Squeak is not quite so happy. When she came back from the Admiral's<sup>1</sup> she was all right, but this morning there were all the signs of a cold, and she barked a little. So she stayed in bed. I think you will find her up to-morrow ; but no school till Wednesday or Thursday perhaps. Mrs. (S/Ldr.) Jones informed.

Brown-Williams opened up your car batteries. They were hopelessly gone—both plates badly buckled, and quite beyond repair. I told him to throw them away. The question of new ones we can settle after you get back. I hope the old battery will see you through to-morrow. No news;

<sup>1</sup> Admiral the Hon. Sir Hubert Brand, whose daughter Elizabeth was a great friend of Squeak's.

whatever. The gramophone is in Workshops, being overhauled. They have not yet found its fault. It is wobbling badly in tone. I hope to have it running again by the time you get back.

T. E. S.

He spent weeks trying to trace this wobble, which made the records seem out of tune, but eventually he discovered the timing was at fault and managed to put it right. His patience over such small things was inexhaustible. He never got irritated or lost his temper unless he and Sydney were baulked by authority over the improvements and slight changes of policy they wanted to make. Then Tes would walk up and down restlessly, and passing his hand across his mouth, say with a rather pitying smile : " Oh, well, poor creatures . . . they can see nothing . . . "

Passing his hand across his mouth was a familiar gesture which usually showed he was feeling obstinate or annoyed about something. If a question was asked him by someone he disliked, this gesture meant he had no intention of answering the question : sure enough in a moment he had walked away . . . not rudely . . . but to the questioner, surprisingly. Then perhaps he would come back into the ring of conversation and say matter-of-factly to Sydney : " Please sir, Sergeant S . . . has a message for you," or something like it which changed the subject and completely broke up the discussion.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

Although he was a good mixer on the whole, counting his friends from among the ranks and others from a different sphere altogether, he didn't like playing the part of a social figure or being lionized. He knew Lady Astor and while I was in London he agreed to spend a week-end at her country house. He wrote to me that he wouldn't be at Mount Batten until after I got back.

*Friday, noon.*

I am just off to Cliveden via London. I also hate going off at the moment. Week-ends in big houses are miseries. You will find Leo looking fat and happy. Squeak ditto, I hope : though I have not been able to feed Squeak at all.

The gramophone has had a top overhaul and is louder. The trembling of the tone has gone. The motor is stiff ; and to run it in Workshops first thing in the morning it had to have the valve-switch turned on for 15 to 20 minutes, to warm everything through. It may want a touch of the hand to start it turning, too. In your house 10 minutes warm-up would probably be enough. Workshops is colder. S/Lr. Jones had the Rachmaninoff Concerto, and the Mozart viola quintet.

If I get back at a decent hour on Sunday I shall come in : thank you !

T. E. S.

He did come in, and we had an evening's music, with the gramophone going perfectly : both of us

were glad to be back again in the peaceful atmosphere of home.

Lady Astor brought George Bernard Shaw down to lunch one day. I was busy planning a vegetarian lunch for him, when Tes came in, laughed and said : " Oh, just make it of old bits of wood and string—he won't know as long as there's no meat in it ! "

" Like the pebbles Tom gave the fishes in *The Water Babies* calling them sweets ! " I answered. " That's a dangerous game . . . Tom was condemned to a steady diet of pebbles himself as punishment afterwards ! "

Needless to say I did *not* treat our distinguished guest in such cavalier fashion and we had a gay lunch—though the expression on Tes's face made me feel terrified he was going to inform G. B. S. that he was eating bits of wood and string ! But he didn't.

After lunch we went down to the slipway where the men were working on one of the flying-boats. G. B. S.'s hat blew off when he was down looking at the engines and Lady Astor tried to get someone to drop black paint on his head. This too—I'm glad to say—wasn't done. Then Sydney took G. B. S. out to see one of the flying-boats anchored in the Cattewater. When they had got in, G. B. S. was very anxious to go up, but of course Sydney was not able to take him. However, to give him a little amusement they started up the engines and taxied across the water to the other side of the Sound and

back. G. B. S., always keen on a new experience, enjoyed it enormously.

The very beautiful simile Virginia Woolf uses in her book *To the Lighthouse* to explain her chief character's power and personality, could be applied equally well to Tes. "Sometimes bright and flashing—sometimes dark and dull—it was like the light shining out one moment, then swinging round and leaving you in darkness and without a sign that the light had been there at all." On some social occasions he was dull and darkly silent, seeming almost stupid. At others he shone and dazzled everyone present with his brilliance and force.

I shall always remember one such occasion. He came with us to dine with Lord and Lady Mildmay at Flete. The guests included the Dowager Countess of Airlie, Lord and Lady Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, Lady Ponsonby who is now the Dowager Lady Ponsonby, and others whom I have forgotten. The before-dinner time is often a little awkward if everybody doesn't know everybody else. Being in his modest blue uniform and perhaps the shortest person in the room, Tes was conspicuous but perfectly at his ease.

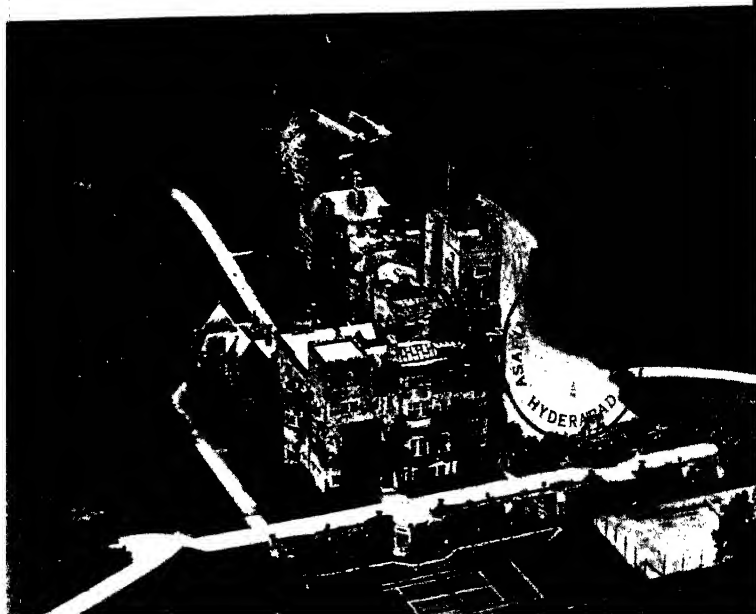
At dinner he talked away amusingly . . . about the R.A.F. . . . about his life in its ranks . . . about his increasing interest in fast motor-boats. When the ladies had left the table, Sydney says he held all the men's interest.

Later on in the drawing-room I had to sing some of the Schubert and Brahms and Wolf he had taught



BARNWELL CASTLE

FLETE





T. E. S. WITH VISCOUNTESS CANTELUPE

PICNIC AT PICKLECOMBE

T. E. S., a friend, myself, Viscountess Cantelupe, General Sir George Jeffreys



me. Then someone drew him out and he began to talk. It was almost uncanny. There in the firelight, surrounded by people, all silent, sat the little figure in his rough almost severe uniform, speaking in a quiet even voice with such truth and knowledge that he was far more convincing than any loud or showy speaker could possibly have been. I am sure everyone who heard him then will remember this evening as vividly as Sydney and I.

Tes enjoyed himself so much that we could hardly drag him away, and during the drive back to Mount Batten he was quiet and content.

Another time he shone was at a lunch party given by Lieutenant-General Sir George Jeffreys and Lady Cantelupe at Devonport. Admiral Sir Hubert Brand and Brigadier-General Sir Charles Grant were also present. Tes and I turned up in the *Biscuit*, tying her up to the steps of the General's house. The Middle East was discussed at lunch ; Tes's opinions as an expert were asked on various questions and he expressed them with such quiet conviction and obvious truth that Admiral and Generals alike listened to him with deference.

Afterwards Lady Cantelupe showed Tes her beautiful garden and then, to her delight, he took her for a run in the *Biscuit*. While they were away I was interested to hear that before we arrived for lunch there had been a fierce controversy about Tes : those who hadn't met him holding different opinions about him and his powers, not all flattering by any means as there was always a certain pre-

judice in the Services about his unconventionality, both in the way he conducted the Arabian campaign and behaved and dressed out East, and for subsequently joining up in the ranks.

But now they all agreed on two things—his sincerity and his amazing power of holding his listeners. Tes grew to admire Lady Cantelupe very much ; he said she had such breadth and generosity of character, and an unconcern for the formalities that could only go with someone of her rank and standing. Whenever we passed the steps of Government House in the *Biscuit* after that day we opened up the throttle to attract her attention and give her a greeting.

More than once Tes came with us to lunch or dine at Admiralty House when Sir Rudolf Bentinck was C.-in-C. and later with his successor, Admiral Sir Hubert Brand. The Navy always appreciated Tes at his true value : some of the photographs illustrating this book show him with officers of high rank who never let Service conventions prevent them from meeting a great man even though he chose to be only a humble aircraftman.

But there were other social occasions during our time at Mount Batten that ended on a different note. Our friends the " Peter " Joneses often asked us in for an informal evening's music as Peter was a fine pianist. One evening Tes and I were sitting in front of the fire in their bungalow listening, when Peter began to play a Bach prelude and fugue. For some unknown reason . . . certainly I know

it is my bad taste . . . Bach's music has a terrible effect on me. I always want to laugh ! This was no exception to the rule and I began to giggle like a naughty child in Church. Tes found it catching and soon we were both laughing loudly, feeling very abashed, but unable to stop ! Peter broke off his fugue, turned round on the music stool and looked at us, really hurt and a little angry. This made us worse. He shut the piano and refused to play anything more—for which I don't blame him. After many apologies and explanations that it wasn't his playing but only the precise and characteristic notes of Bach that had set us off, he forgave us.

But we were still feeling remorseful and a little uncomfortable when the door burst open and Hermione, the small daughter of the house, came in crying bitterly.

"What's the matter ?" asked her father.

"Oh, Daddy, my mice were cold . . . and I put them in the oven to get warm . . . and then . . ."

"And then what, darling ?"

"Then . . . then I forgot them . . . and cook turned on the oven . . . and . . ." The rest of the story can be left to the imagination, but Hermione was inconsolable as she loved her pet mice dearly. So ended a very strange evening !

## XIX

Tes liked most of my relations—luckily—and his special favourites were Lily, my own sister, and Sydney's sister, Patty Edelston. Lily is quiet and reserved, but Patty—small and fair and blue-eyed like Tes himself—bubbles over with fun, and she and Tes were always laughing and joking together. Once when Patty was staying with us we decided to take tea out in the *Biscuit* as it was a very lovely afternoon.

In the Sound, which looked for all the world like a mill-pond and had a treacherous oily calm that Tes and I had grown to know and suspect, we found a nasty underswell. We tied up to a buoy for tea, but as soon as we began to unpack the basket Patty said we'd have to move or the motion would make her disgrace herself. Tes laughed. He was a good sailor and had never felt sea-sick, so he only saw the comic side of Patty's plight. We packed up and moved off towards the Mount Edgcumbe shore to try and get shelter. Tes speculated as to where we should get most—in the lee of the land, or farther out—and we cruised round to see. It was a little like choosing a picnic place ; no one could agree. Finally we were just tying up to another yacht's

anchor when a large coal barge came uncomfortably near and rocked us violently with her wash.

The skipper evidently thought we must be in trouble, because he went about and advancing slowly upon us called out : " Would you like a tow to harbour ? "

This made us laugh, and although Tes very politely thanked him and told him we were only having a picnic and were quite all right, our laughter upset him and he thought we were pulling his leg. Impossible that any three grown-ups in their senses could possibly enjoy picnicking in a speed-boat tied to a buoy and rising and falling with the swell ! He turned about in high dudgeon and gave us another and much worse dose of his wash.

Tes climbed along to the nose of the *Biscuit* to untie her, but at that moment another boat passed and rocked us so badly that Tes was nearly flung overboard. I clung wildly on to his foot and just managed to save him. Then we thought we'd better move as fast as we could. Hurrying into the lea of the Mount Edgcumbe grounds we found sheltered water and had our tea in peace. Patty was laughing too much to remember her earlier qualms and the evening turned out so serene and beautiful that we just stayed there quietly at anchor while the sunset turned the sky and sea from gold to pinkish red before its colours faded into a grey twilight. The woods of Mount Edgcumbe grew a darker and darker olive green, and when the moon

rose it shone on our silver decks until they looked like mirrors. We stopped talking and just sat and watched. Then it grew cool and a little shivery so we made for home.

Lord Mount Edgcumbe very kindly gave me a key to one of the private entrances to his park, and Tes and I often crossed the Sound and went there for a walk. The hilly headland of Mount Edgcumbe is covered with fine trees and is half in Devon, half in Cornwall. The house and park have for centuries been coveted.

During the Civil War they were held for Charles I, and the story goes that when Philip of Spain sent the Armada to conquer England, he promised Mount Edgcumbe as a reward for victory to his Lord High Admiral, the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

In August a part of the grounds, called the Amphitheatre, is covered with deep blue hydrangeas. Tes called them "bath sponges" and loved going to look at them. The path round the top of the Amphitheatre is lined with shrubs—azaleas, rhododendrons, pink and white camellias, which flourish in the mild south-coast climate. At the top you could look right over the Sound and out to sea, so often almost a Mediterranean blue. Here were bright colours enough for Tes. He revelled in them, and often threatened to pick a large armful of camellias, for the blue vase at home. He never did, of course, as that would have been taking advantage of the owner's kindness to us. But I

am bound to confess that we did sometimes take a branch or two of copper beech, and sneak away down a side path to the entrance pretending to be terrified of being discovered by an irate gardener or Lord Mount Edgcumbe himself—who wouldn't, we knew really, have minded a bit. But we enjoyed feeling like naughty boys in the apple orchard.

There was a little house at Thurlestone which Major Nathan sometimes lent Sydney and myself. Once when we were there Tes came too and spent a few days of his well-earned leave. We were all feeling in a leisurely mood except Sydney who played golf. Tes didn't care for games and never played them, so he would sit quietly with me in the garden or by the sea and talk and read. Leo and Banner (whose real owner was Lily) were with us, and one afternoon we were out walking when Leo went up to a hedge and picked blackberries off it himself and ate them ! Tes was enchanted and so was I.

This gave us an idea ; we would go blackberrying ourselves. The next day we prawned in the morning, blackberried in the afternoon and in the evening collected mushrooms. Tes said contentedly : “ This is too good : all three perfect doings in one day.”

Before anyone was up next morning he went out to look at a field where he had assured us a “ ring of mushrooms ” would grow overnight. Sydney and I scoffed a little at this clairvoyance, but Tes was right. He came back with a basketful

and we enjoyed fresh mushrooms on toast for breakfast.

It was on this little holiday that the photograph facing this page was taken. One day after lunch, we had all gone out to sit in the sunshine when Sydney, who is a real photographic fiend, never allowing a day to pass without taking a snap of some sort, suddenly said : "Tes, I must take a snap." Tes gave way good-humouredly as he always did, and the result was this snap, which amused Tes very much and which he himself named "The Judgment of Paris."

The apple (which really was an old tennis ball) was in Leo's mouth, and although we all begged him to tell us whom the said "apple" was to go to, he never would, but said : "No, Leo must do that."

I stayed at Thurlestone alone with the dogs another time, and to my intense sorrow Banner picked up poison and grew very ill. I phoned to Sydney at Mount Batten and asked him to tell Tes.

11.ix.30.

The Adjutant told me this morning that poor Banner is very ill with poisoning. This is terrible. I like the poor beast so much, and he was so enjoying his holiday. What a shame to leave such stuff about. I hope he will get over it, without being damaged. He says he is a little better to-day. I suppose it must have happened yesterday. Tell him I am so sorry.



T. E. S. AND SYDNEY AT THURLESTONE

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS  
T. E. S., Mrs. "Pippin" Galpin, Lily, Myself.





IN THE *BISCUIT*

THE GOLDEN REIGN

The *Biscuit* has burned out its dynamo, which has gone to London for re-winding, if possible. I had hoped to come over to you yesterday, but as it is, there is nothing to be done. The boat is considerate to have broken down while I go on leave. I am just starting. It drizzles. I shall be so glad to get back.

T. E. S.

I was very disappointed that he couldn't have come over to see me before his leave because of the *Biscuit's* breaking down, but it couldn't be helped. I nursed Banner desperately, but the poor beast was too ill to recover. Finally I had to write and break the news of his death to Tes and he wrote me the following letter. No one who reads it can ever suggest again that he was insensitive over such things. Although when he was alive, Tes and I used sometimes jokingly to call him Banana we were both devoted to Banner, and no other dog quite took his place.

14, BARTON STREET,  
WESTMINSTER,  
LONDON,  
S.W.1.

25.ix.30.

Your letter was returned from 24 Barton St. and then followed me about. So actually the photographs came the day before it. Yes, I wish it was Plymouth now! I am having a lot to do: only

Brough cannot promise me the bike till the morning of October 2 : so I will have to take every minute of my 3 weeks. It is a pity. The last two days have been marvellous weather, and sunlight in London wastes itself.

As for the poor dog, I had been hoping that he was better. So beautiful a thing should never die ; and he was such an attractive and interesting character, too. I shall miss him very sadly at Mount Batten. You and his owner and the Wing-Commander must feel miserable about it. The un-necessity of the tragedy makes it so much worse.

T. E. S.

## XX

OCCASIONALLY in Devonshire you get one of those rare days in late autumn which are as warm and fine as summer. Some friends of ours, Air-Commodore and Mrs. Peregrine Fellowes, were staying at Bigbury Bay along the coast, and invited Tes and myself to lunch. I wondered whether we should go in the *Biscuit*, and Tes came up to the house to discuss the question. Finally we decided we would, as it was such a lovely day, but we knew it would be an undertaking as our faithful craft was only a frail speed-boat and not designed for the open sea.

The Sound was dead calm, the sky blue and the sun shining. Off we set. All was well until we got outside the breakwater ; then, although the sea was glassy, we were overtaken by an enormous following swell and had to keep tacking to avoid being swamped in it. Tes said it was one of the strangest sensations he had ever experienced : the contrast of perfect weather, glassy sea and this hungry-looking swell which seemed bent on devouring us. When we were in the trough of a wave we could see a wall of sinister-looking oily water which blocked our view.

We forced our way along with great difficulty,

clearing Stoke Point, East of Plymouth Sound, and when we reached the bar across the river's mouth we found the tide low because of the time we had spent getting there for which we hadn't reckoned when we started. The sea was roughish and crossing the bar looked a tough proposition. Tes thought he could manage it, and with a rush over we went. His skill and cool head were equal to the problem.

We cruised up the river's mouth a short way and saw the Felloweses on the bank waving to us. But Tes was anxious about getting back.

"If we don't turn and go back immediately," he said, "we shall stick on the bar with the falling tide. And that would be dangerous in this sea."

"So we'd better go back at once?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so."

We were too far out to be able to tell the Felloweses of our necessary decision, and to their surprise about we turned and made off for home, without our lunch and leaving them bewildered and astonished, waving frantically to us from the shore.

Tes would never court serious risks when he had a passenger on board, but sometimes if he were alone he would take the *Biscuit* out to sea and call in at places on the Cornish and Devon coasts. He didn't consider the *Biscuit* particularly sea-worthy, although he had floating gear put in to make sure of keeping her up.

One day a P. & O. liner anchored outside the breakwater; it was too rough for her to come in to

harbour. I was piloting the *Biscuit* and Tes said : " Let's go and pay her a visit," wondering what I would say to the proposition.

Frankly I admit I was exceedingly nervous of venturing out into the open sea, but nothing would have induced me to confess it to him. " All right ; let's go," I said, and off we went.

I know Tes never for a moment believed that I would go out myself, but on his part he wouldn't dream of telling me to stop. We were both a little silly, I suppose ; but all went well. Outside the breakwater it was choppy and most unpleasant and the green waves splashed over our bows. I didn't like it at all, but I went on doggedly till we came level with the ship. Having done what Tes had suggested I was only too thankful to put her nose about and make for home as fast as I could. Nothing would have induced me to do this with or for anyone else !

One week-end I spent at Mount Edgcumbe Tes took me over in the *Biscuit* as it was much quicker and more convenient than going all round by road. Among the house-party guests was H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester. When we arrived Lord and Lady Ebrington asked if they could have a ride in the *Biscuit*. Lady Ebrington enjoyed it so much that she asked Tes if he would come over and fetch her on the Monday to take her from Mount Edgcumbe to Plymouth to catch her train. She arrived at the water's edge without a mackintosh and Tes warned her that she would get a " little

wet." But she was determined to go and as there wasn't time to go back for one, she went without and turned up at Plymouth far more than a "little wet"—in fact with every garment soaked! But she was thrilled with her experience and was perfectly equal to the occasion. When the rest of the house-party arrived at the station—they had come round by road—they found a porter solemnly guarding a compartment with drawn blinds.

"You can't go in there, sir; there's a lady changing some of her clothes."

This wetting could do no one any harm in the mild Devon summer weather, but by November Mount Batten and the Sound grew cold and blustery. One such morning, Lily, Squeak and I were sitting in the car on the breakwater watching Flying-Officer S. K. Wood in the air. Suddenly we were unpleasantly surprised to see one of his floats come off. How would he be able to land without it? Certainly it would be a very tricky business. Tes was standing near, and we all watched anxiously while the machine circled lower and lower. Just as she touched the water she turned over, and before she could be towed in, sank.

One of the fast motor-boats, which always stood by with engines running when a flying-boat was in the air, rushed off to the pilot's rescue and he was brought ashore unharmed. It was chiefly to obtain still more efficient rescues of this kind that Tes so diligently advocated having faster motor-boats in the R.A.F.

The plane sank and we went back in the afternoon to watch the salvage operations. Tes came and talked to us while they were going on ; but no progress was made and he grew impatient, hating to see a muddle which he felt he could put right himself. The trouble was that she was lying in thirty feet of water and no one could succeed in getting a hawser round her to lift her.

At last Tes could stand it no longer. Although it was a bitterly cold November afternoon and blowing hard, he jumped into a motor-boat and speeding out to the wreck, divested himself of coat, trousers, boots—in fact everything but his singlet. He took the hawser between his teeth and dived in. Somehow he managed to do what was necessary beneath the surface and in a short time he came up again, climbed into the boat, put on his clothes and returned to shore.

In a few moments he did what the others had failed to do in as many hours ; it was things like this that gained him the admiration and respect of the men. I couldn't help thinking that if he hadn't overcome his fear of the water on the yacht *Karen*, he would never have been able to do this salvage work so well and so promptly.

Another day he was not so clever and had what might have been a serious mishap. After he had dropped me at our steps he said he would take one last turn round the Cattewater in the *Biscuit* to test out the engine. In front of the house there were several large buoys to which the flying-boats tied

up, and smaller ones for the power-boats. Near one of them Tes leaned down to examine something in the engine. I stood watching with bated breath. It was no good calling out a warning because he was too far off, and I saw that at any second he *must* strike the buoy. There was nothing to do. Over it he went, just as I thought, ripping the keel right out of the bottom.

For a few yards Tes didn't realize that anything had happened. Then my shouts and gesticulations reached him, and turning he looked for the keel—only to find it was firmly embedded in the buoy. It was wonderful luck that nothing more serious had happened ; the impact might easily have thrown him overboard or crashed his head on the *Biscuit's* engine.

## XXI

Tes and I decided to have the *Biscuit's* cushions re-covered. This was an event of great importance and we discussed all possible colour schemes. Finally we chose navy blue as a pleasant contrast to her silver sides and deck. We also thought we would have the letter "S" embroidered on the small back cushion so that it would do for both of us.

I was going up to stay at Laila's house in London and could choose and buy the material there, so we carefully measured the cushions and wrote down the measurements on a slip of paper. When I arrived I found a letter from Laila asking me to go over to Paris as she was ill with fever there and felt lonely. I decided I would, on the spur of the moment, and wrote and asked Tes to send me my passport ; Sydney being away from home as well.

15.xii.30.

Your letter did not find me till 4 o'clock, and this is scribbled while Cpl. Murren<sup>1</sup> waits. Passport and mail (all except  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  ones) enclosed. Instructions had been left with Cpl. Murren to forward

<sup>1</sup> Our post corporal at Mount Batten.

nothing. Please send fresh orders for after Wednesday. Two parcels go to-night and the pheasants. There is a C.O.D. for 6/9 waiting. Do you want it?

I have told Squeak about your Paris trip. She says if Mrs. Stanley S. will provide her with clothes she will agree to come too! Meanwhile she is in bed. Doctor Thorpe says "up to-morrow" but not out-of-doors till her throat is quite easy. She isn't barking and is quite happy and very much amused. Weather dank and beastly.

T. E. S.

I've forgotten to hope that Paris will be a success. I never liked it greatly, but then, there were political reasons for that!

T. E. S.

Laila and I got back from Paris just before Christmas, and Sydney and Squeak joined us at Regent's Park. Tes had always said, in discussing the time when he would be leaving the R.A.F. and wore mufti, that he had made up his mind just what he would wear: a grey woollen pull-over with a polo collar and grey-flannel trousers—really a sort of civil uniform. He was so used to wearing uniform that he felt he would like to limit himself in the same way and wear the same type of clothes always. I promised him I would keep him supplied with pull-overs. There was a kind of cashmere wool, very soft, with which I knitted Sydney's socks.

I would use that for Tes's pull-overs, as he had always liked it.

Now I set to work to make one, hoping it would be done for Christmas—although I would never have sent it to him labelled "Christmas present" as he disliked set festivities as much as I. We often plotted how we could escape them. In his letter to me he refers to the pull-over I made him as the "thing." When I sent it to him I had to ask him to measure the *Biscuit's* cushions again; stupidly I had left the paper behind on which we had so carefully written them down.

29.xii.30.

I have not written, all my days having been shared between Homer and the *Biscuit*. We have, I feel sure, found what was wrong with the engine—as usual the electrical works. Bill the pup had one bad day, during which his nose swelled to about 2 inches across. Committee of Mr. Worthington, S/M Furner and myself sat on him, and as a decision called in the vet. Who pronounced it possibly a feather or thorn in the nostril, causing inflammation. He syringed the poor little beast up the nostrils with salt and water. Bill sneezed for about an hour, and is as well as ever. Leo is quite happy. Mr. Worthington and S/Lr. Jones have had them, so he has not had many biscuits.

Many thanks for the "thing." Either my figure is degenerating, the Wing-Commander's much

libelled—or you measured it off Squeak. Anyway it fits !

The *Biscuit's* cushions are about 2 feet long and 19 inches broad, each, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick. Two of them. The back is 3 feet 8 inches wide and 16 inches high. The small cushion you used as a back rest is 16 inches each way. All these are exact sizes : I suppose there should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch of stuff for turning in, at each joint. If it comes to a lot, you must let me pay my share. I feel confident the boat will be serviceable to-morrow. We have had the engine out, and worked very hard on her.

T. E. S.

After New Year we all returned to Mount Batten, Sydney and Squeak by train, while Tes came up to London so that he and I could motor down together. On the way we stopped in Camberley. Tes roamed about and looked at the Staff College while I had a "perm." Afterwards he called for me and met my hairdresser, Mr. Wellard, who said to me that it was a great honour to meet him, and that he thought he was "very charming and had delightful manners." It was then I said : "I'm afraid he'll kill himself one day on his motor-bicycle," as Mr. Wellard reminded me only the other day.

Tes hadn't driven a car for many years and had no wish to drive one again. He said : "I'll do anything but drive the thing !" Instead he considered it his own particular responsibility to keep

me from being bored while I was driving. I certainly never *was* bored as he was interested in everything we passed and could make me interested too—whether it was a view or an old house, or just something that his quick and observant eyes noticed and that amused him as we went by.

Our talk was seldom very abstract or metaphysical ; no one wants to live in the rarefied air of philosophy for long, and I suppose the triviality of much of our conversation and the ordinariness of the things we did together would have surprised Tes's hero-worshippers to whom he was a sort of glamorous legend.

In fact one such hero-worshipper *did* have a shock of this kind. One morning when I was gardening and Tes was watching me, chatting and with hands in pockets, the call went up . . . "Mackerel in the Sound!" As usual we—or rather I—downed tools, collected fishing-rods and rushed to the breakwater. Tes, who usually didn't fish, though he enjoyed eating the fish when someone else caught it! came with me. It was an amazing sight. The water was rippling with silver. The brit—a small fish like whitebait—were rising to the surface in myriads to escape the hungry mouths of the mackerel.

Tes and I stood on the breakwater together and as fast as I threw in a line with a double hook on it I brought out two mackerel. As I landed them, Tes unhooked them, baited the hooks and in went the line again. A man was standing near staring

fixedly at us. I heard afterwards that he said he “never expected to see the great Colonel Lawrence pulling mackerel off a line and baiting it for an ordinary-looking sort of woman and obviously having a grand time ! ”

The poor “great ones of the earth ” ! What do their admirers expect them to do ? To live completely detached from ordinary life and its pleasant doings ?

## XXII

HIGH up overlooking the Sound and just below the Martello tower we had found a spot from which we got a marvellous view over the English Channel. We had it hollowed out and turfed, so that a seat could be made to fit in and a table placed in front. This we called our "Lido," and here most mornings I would come with a book or some letters to write, and a thermos of coffee. Sometimes in his morning break Tes joined me; we had our "elevenses" together and a peaceful ten minutes or so.

February 4th, 1931, was a lovely, warm, early spring day. Tes and I sat in our Lido and looked over the glassy surface of the Sound which seemed an endless mirror, stretching away for ever. Two or three flying-boats were up as usual, practising firing at targets at sea. Presently one of them began to circle downward as they always do before landing. As she circled over the breakwater Tes said: "That boat looks queer."

To our consternation we saw she was gliding from a good height, without making any attempt to flatten out as she should to make a safe landing. Suddenly before our horrified eyes she nose-dived

straight into the sea with hardly a splash. As she slowly rose to the surface we could make out no movement or sign of human life on her. My heart stood still. Surely Sydney was in the air this morning? Although it didn't look like his way of flying—yet all the same I was afraid . . .

I looked at Tes. His face was taut and set—his body alert: all his relaxation had gone.

“Tes, do you think it's Sydney?”

“No, decidedly not; but I must go and see what can be done.”

Without another word we ran down the hill as fast as we could; Tes to the breakwater and I to the car which stood at the bottom of the steps leading up to our Lido.

How I got over to the other side of the Base I don't know; it seemed hours, but was really only a matter of three minutes or so. In spite of everything—could it be Sydney?

But there he was on the slipway, safe and sound. He was standing there, unaware of any disaster, with the flying-boat from which he had just landed being tied up to her buoy. I got out of the car and called to him. He saw at once by my face—which was, he said “as white as a sheet”—that something terrible had happened. No one on that side of the Base had seen the crash, and it had happened so quickly that the news hadn't yet reached them. I told Sydney of what I'd seen.

Tes then ran up and said: “I've got a boat standing by for you, sir.”

We hurried over to the seaward side and now saw only the tail of the flying-boat sticking up.

"How many men are there in her?" asked Sydney.

"I think there are twelve—but two have come up."

Sydney and Tes jumped into the motor-boat and went out to the wreck. The duty boat, which as usual had been standing by, was there before him, and had picked up the two survivors.

There were still ten more of the crew trapped inside.

Then, Sydney tells me, Tes became master of the situation. His gift of quick, crystal-clear thinking and natural leadership made his authority instantly acceptable to everyone there—including his own Commanding Officer. Each time Sydney's orders followed Tes's suggestions, which were given quietly and respectfully and in such a way that he could accept them without a shade of resentment. Indeed, he told me after, he was thankful that Tes's mastery of such a tragic and difficult situation should have been available in the attempt to rescue as many men as possible from the crashed machine. They stood by in the duty motor-boat, discussing what was best to do. Tes said: "We should hail that trawler" (there was one anchored near them). This was done and the trawler at once responded and came up alongside, endeavouring to get a hawser round the tail of the wrecked

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

flying-boat to prevent her from sinking any further. Tes thought that some of the crew might possibly be trapped near the aft cockpit close to the tail—which was now above the surface of the water—so taking off his tunic he plunged in. But he could only feel, as he thought, the rubber dinghy partially inflated which had jammed the entrance. He came up, and said to Sydney : “ It’s no use going further. I might get stuck, and there would be no sense in that.”

He had no feeling of fear, but only of the job to be done and the best way to do it.

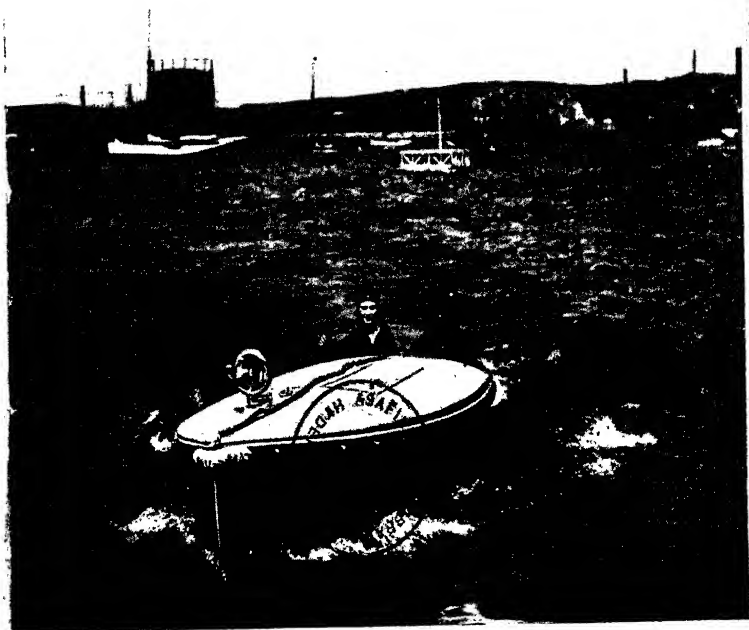
“ If only we could get a sling, sir, to go round the boat and lift her ! ”

His brain worked like lightning. The salvage boat went off full speed ahead to get in touch with the dockyard, and Admiral Sir Hubert Brand immediately sent over more salvage boats with hawsers and diving apparatus.

Tes dived with the others and released the body of Wing-Commander Tucker who had taken the controls of the flying-boat at the time of the crash ; he had been caught between the control column and the seat. He was dead.

The wireless operator, Corporal Barry, who was one of the first members of the crew to escape, had come up to the surface in what might have been an air-bubble, unharmed and scarcely wet ! Heroic efforts were made to save Flying-Officer S. K. Woods, but he died later from shock and exposure.

Another officer, Flying-Officer Charles Riley,



SETTING OUT IN THE *BISCUIT*

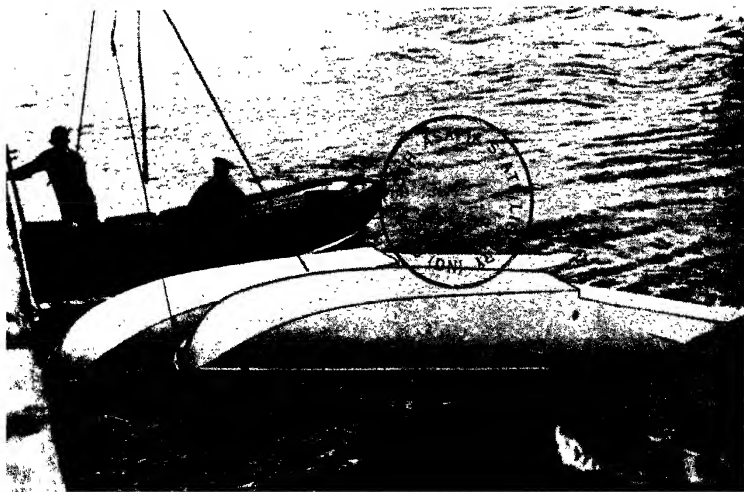
READY FOR A PICNIC





THE FIRST 200 CLASS POWER-BOAT—T. E. S. AT THE WHEEL

THE WRECKED SEAPLANE



who was in the forward gun turret, had a miraculous escape. Though injured he was able to drag himself free from the wreckage and came to the surface. Flight-Lieutenant Eley, who was the Captain of the flying-boat, was also saved, but had serious injuries from which he recovered after a long time. He is still an active officer of the R.A.F.

The body of Leading-Aircraftman W. S. Rutledge was recovered, but the rest of the crew of twelve still remained in the body of the submerged flying-boat, which had sunk in about twenty-six feet of water.

Flying-Officer Kelly Rogers, now Captain of one of the first transatlantic mail boats, worked desperately on the salvage operations. Hawsers were attached to the wrecked flying-boat, but it was impossible to lift her. At last she was dragged round to the slipway, where a party of airmen worked away at the hull, in a last endeavour to remove the remains of the unfortunate crew.

By this time she was only a mangled mass of metal. The other half completely disintegrated and the bodies of the men inside must have been smashed up and sucked down into the depths, as when Sydney and Tes examined the hull that night, all they could find was a shred of an airman's jacket fluttering on a projecting bit of duralumin. Six bodies were never even seen.

It was an evening of desolation. My task—the hardest and most tragic I have ever had to do—was to drive into Plymouth as quickly as possible

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

and break the news of her husband's death to Mrs. Tucker.

The next days were shadowed for us all on the station, but life and routine in the Air Force must go on, and except that we missed a smiling familiar face or two, nothing was really altered.

One member of the crew had a lucky escape. That morning he was taken to hospital, and was at the time most disappointed. His place was taken by Aircraftman Oates, a Devon man, who was one of our best footballers and cricketers, and had played both for Devon and Cornwall. He was soon to have been married, but unfortunately was one of the missing.

The accident seemed inexplicable because these Iris III flying-boats were famous for their reliability and had flown many long distances in perfect safety. At the time they were the fastest and largest flying-boats of their kind. This one, No. S238, had three Rolls-Royce engines capable of developing 2,000 h.p., with a cruising speed of 80 knots and a radius of 1,000 miles. Sir Philip Sassoon, when he was Under-Secretary of State for Air, flew to India and back in a flying-boat of this type, and it was in another that Sydney had started off to fly to Iceland in 1930.

There was of course an inquest, and Tes's share in the rescue operations came out. The London papers had headlines : "Lawrence of Arabia has turned up again." His evidence at the inquest was so clear and well-expressed that it is worth reprinting.

"About 11.30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 4th, I was standing on the rocks at the shore end of Batten watching the flight of Iris III, which was circling in the sun. It came out of the haze and circled over my head. At the time she was flying normally and the engines sounded absolutely all right. After watching her for less than five minutes I saw her turn into what wind there was and approach, throttle back her engines, and glide steeply as though to alight on the water."

"Did she seem to glide down under perfect control?"

"Perfect."

"But very fast?"

"Yes, very fast; she struck the water just under the pilot's seat, forward near the bows."

"You saw the waves crash over her?"

"Yes, the wave she made herself. The tail of the machine came up, her main planes crashed into the water and folded back together. The hull dived straight to the bottom, and the tail swung very slowly towards Batten breakwater, until it rested upside down only a few feet above the water. The crash occurred about six hundred yards south of Batten breakwater in about twenty-six feet of water."

### XXIII

Tes's progress as a skilled mechanic was remarkable considering that he first enlisted in the R.A.F. as an unskilled aircraftman and had consequently a hard time of it at Uxbridge. Sydney told me he had developed into one of the ablest mechanics in his command. His workmanship was neat and he knew how to tune and trim an engine till it ran perfectly. Being employed in the Workshops he was brought in close touch with the constructional activities of the station.

At the end of 1931 Sydney lent him temporarily to Scott Paine's yard at Hythe, Southampton, to test one of the new and faster R.A.F. motor-boats whose design had interested him greatly. This design was the result of long and careful thought and experiment. Existing now in concrete form it was ready to be tried out.

While he was at Hythe he had rooms at Myrtle Cottage owned by Mrs. Biddlecombe, of whom he often talked, and said she made him comfortable and happy and that he appreciated it greatly. Naturally I missed him a good deal, he was so busy that he hardly had time to write . . .

30.IV.31.

I should have written long ago, but so many new things keep on claiming us here. I have seldom been so busy, and in a strange place there are no hands available for help.

It seems that we shall be here at least a week more.

We have been able to do much, and get more done, so that I do not grudge the time spent. Most of the weather has been awful but I have noted two good *Biscuit* days. Plymouth will seem quietly peaceful when we can get back. I badly need to hear something harmonic.

This new 100 h.p. engine is excellent. Our "cruiser" should be much improved. We hope for her launching on Saturday. On Tuesday the Experts arrive to her trials.

It is good that the W/Cmdr. got back at last. I hope the other F/B may turn up soon. 9901 is going to Gosport to-day for her torpedo trials. The R.R. engined *Southampton* flies beautifully, and Baird praises her loudly. Of course that is part of his job.

No Homer here : at least only three evenings in the fortnight. My eyes are all inflamed with salt spray and rain-pellets, and we seldom stop before 8 p.m. and are then tired. As we often get out on the water by 6 a.m. you will see that our days are long. Corporal [*sic*] Bradbury and I relay each other, when possible, but usually both must be on the job.

T. E. S.

Sydney was very much overworked and wanted Tes back at Mount Batten, but as is often the case, the trials at Hythe took him several weeks longer than anyone had expected. Tes was co-operating closely with Flight-Lieutenant W. E. Beauforte-Greenwood, head of the Marine Equipment branch of the Air Ministry. They had met at Mount Batten a year before, but this was the first time they actually worked together. The other officers Tes mentions in the next letter were on the Coastal Command Headquarters Staff.

22.V.31.

I am so sorry : your letter should have been answered yesterday : only we got up at 6 and worked till 10 p.m., W/Cmdr. de Courcy and Mr. Beauforte-Greenwood being here, and wishing to take out A/Cmdr. Bigsworth and G/Capt. Nanson. Then to-day we had A. V. M. Lambe, and W/Comdr. Huskinson and three others unknown to me. The boat has been suffering from one engine trouble after another for the past fortnight, and everybody (there are the maker's people here, besides Mr. Scott Paine's fitters) at their wits' end to keep her going or make her right.

I shall be relieved and thankful to get back to Mount Batten. This job has been beyond a joke lately. Only to-day we have found and cured the main trouble, I fancy. For half an hour we had absolutely a perfect run. I'm writing in our dinner hour (we keep firm's times) and this afternoon we

go out to see if the cure remains permanent. Nothing radically wrong with the engines you understand : but minor defects that have to be put right as they occur.

As for coming back, I'm not a free agent there. I think that Mr. Greenwood wrote to the W/Cmdr. about it—at least he told me that he had leave to keep us here (don't forget that Mrs. Bradley is a grass widow all this while and Corpl. Bradley a grass bachelor) and I cannot ask to be relieved from an unfinished job. If they decide that we cannot do it, then that's all well : but so long as they tell us to go on, we must try and find out means to get round the snags. It is not only the cruiser, you know : there are 12 new-type dinghies on our hands for test and timing. We had improved them quite a lot !

Poor *Biscuit* ! They are making a silencer for her here, and meanwhile I look at her exhaust pipe sadly ; but not too sadly, for to confess the truth I have had almost all the speed-boating the most confirmed water-rat could want. Something quiet would be my choice now ; a country walk perhaps, and some flowers to pick. I am sick of salt water, and the burn of spray. Meanwhile no Homer—not one line of it for a month : and Augustus John only 15 miles off wanting me to sit for him, and I have no time.

Disastrous work, this specialization on R.A.F. motor-boat design. I shall take up crochet, I think.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

Please tell the W/Cmdr. that I cannot ask to be relieved of this job, or wish to be relieved of it, till it goes right : and that may not be for a week yet. The works are to run through the holidays, and we will keep at it as hard as we can. I am sorry for leaving him in the lurch, this way.

Give poor Leo a marshmallow for me. There is an S.5 <sup>1</sup> roaring up and down the water now. Sunlight and sharp S.E. wind. Flying weather.  
T. E. S.

This is the letter Flight-Lieutenant Beauforte-Greenwood wrote Sydney. As it is a personal letter I am allowed to quote it !

### *Personal*

AIR MINISTRY,  
ADASTRAL HOUSE,  
KINGSWAY, W.C.2.  
15<sup>th</sup> May, 1931.

DEAR WING-COMMANDER,

May I express to you my great appreciation for all the assistance you have been good enough to afford my branch by allowing Shaw to run the trials of the new speed-boat for the R.A.F. at Hythe. I can assure you that the help which has been given, together with the reports, have been most useful and resulted in bringing us up to date and at least 4-5 years ahead of the Admiralty. Such an advance would have been impossible without the

<sup>1</sup> A seaplane.

aid which you have so readily given us, and I thank you very much indeed.

It is proposed that Corporal Bradbury, and Shaw, should complete the 25 hours trials (provided for in the Contract) with the new machinery at Hythe, and then for the boat to return under her own power to Mount Batten to complete another 25 hours trials of machinery.

As you know Shaw carried out a 50 hour running trials of this new machinery in an experimental hull belonging to the Firm, and as a result of the satisfactory running and favourable report of this machinery we have ordered 8 launches which will be ready for delivery by the end of July, in time for the Schneider Trophy Test.

I am hoping to be able myself to bring round No. 200 from Hythe to Mount Batten within the next 10 days, when I hope to see you and thank you personally.

Yours sincerely,  
W. E. BEAUFORTE-GREENWOOD.

Tes enjoyed flying and was very much interested in its development, but when he rejoined the R.A.F. after his two and a half years in the Tank Corps he was too old to become a pilot ; he was forty-one. This was a great pity in many ways. He had flown a considerable amount in Egypt during the war of 1914-18 and knew a good deal about aeroplanes, his enthusiasm for air travel being in no way damped by being involved in two serious accidents.

The originality and creativeness he put into improving speed-boats for the Service might have been used for aircraft.

He seized every opportunity of going up, and many of his flights were made with Sydney. The fact of Mount Batten being a flying-boat station gave Tes the opportunity to become more and more interested in flying-boats, and he shared Sydney's conviction that they would prove to be of much greater commercial value as long distance aircraft of the future. Sydney has always held this opinion and he and Tes had many discussions on the subject. It is queer, one never expects a flying-boat to crash, and so thinks it is much safer than a land plane. I myself have always felt this, and not even Tes could tell me the reason for it, except that the general opinion was one of confidence in a flying-boat, thereby eliminating a great deal of the fear of crashing.

Tes had a wished-for dream : to go on a world flying-boat cruise. He thought it would give him an epic subject for another book—an Odyssey of to-day. But above all he considered that such a long cruise in all climates and under all conditions—strange seas, different temperatures, currents and winds, different lengths of overland flying—would show up the potentialities of flying-boats better than any number of short flights could ever do.

Unfortunately for Tes his dream never came true.

A great friend of Sydney's is Major A. A. Nathan,

and at that time they jointly owned a Moth seaplane—then a rare machine in England. Tes was very interested in the Moth, and looked after it in his spare time : he, too, became great friends with Major Nathan who, as a result of a mountain-climbing accident in Switzerland, had lost the full use of both feet. Being debarred from sports, except a little golf, he learned to fly instead. During the war he had been a gunner and flown as an observer.

He often took Tes as his passenger in the Moth and they made several flights to the Channel and Scilly Isles, and together explored the south coast of Devon and Cornwall, alighting in the many hidden little coves Tes had found and bathed and birds'-nested in as a boy.

One day Major Nathan flew his Moth from Stag Lane Aerodrome to Mount Batten. Miss Amy Johnson was then learning to fly. She asked to be allowed to go with him to Mount Batten for the experience. They landed at Staddon Golf Links, near the gates of the Base, and Tes went up to meet the machine. When he saw Amy Johnson standing by the machine he took Major Nathan on one side and said : " Is that a bird ? "—" No," Major Nathan replied, " it's a flying bird."

On another occasion when Tes and Major Nathan were flying, they made a forced landing at Padstow, and, having discovered a small leak in the petrol tank, Tes decided he must stop it up with soap. As they taxied ashore, Tes jumped out and

ran up the beach towards a woman who was carrying a basket, and returned with the soap.

"How did you know she had any?" asked Major Nathan. "Well," answered Tes, "she was carrying a clothes-basket, so I felt sure she was a washerwoman." She was.

When Tes eventually got back from Hythe we had some very dirty weather and one winter night, during a storm of lashing wind and rain, the flying-boats were lifted bodily off the water and their moorings dragged some distance. Luckily when Sydney and Tes went out to see, they found that no damage had been done.

Tes's fertile brain at once began to devise means of preventing this "kiting," as it is officially called. Sydney and he drafted a letter to the Air Minister, giving their observations on the occurrence and asking if they might put up proposals for preventing it in the future. The Air Ministry replied that they would very much like to see these proposals. Tes then drew them up in a memorandum which was excellently clear and to the point and the Ministry found them of great practical value.

## XXIV

OUR three years at Mount Batten gradually slipped away without any of us noticing them go. We were all happy and busy and serene in our tight little world surrounded by sea ; but at last we realized that change and a pulling up of roots was threatening this security and we felt an inexpressible sadness. Sydney was due for promotion—which was good for him and for his career and the family's welfare—but it would mean being transferred to another station and breaking up our friendly partnership of three unless Tes could come with us. And this would be unlikely to happen.

Here at Mount Batten Tes was able to be himself ; to do good work worthy of his capabilities, to be at ease and childishly happy in trifles—in family jokes and family doings—and to find peace in the quiet times he and I shared together out of doors, on the water, or sitting by the fire and listening to music . . .

Tes's mother has told me herself that she knew how content and calmly happy he was during those three years, and that knowledge is a small compensation for the pain of our separation and the tragedy of his death while we were so far away in

Singapore. His friendship with Sydney was very important and dear to him also. Their confidence in each other and their appreciation of each other's qualities and characters made this something much more than just a good working partnership. Sydney knew by instinct that Tes could be trusted on every occasion and in any situation, and he encouraged our picnic trips together although there was an element of risk and—inevitably—gossip in the station.

One day a "well-meaning friend" came to Sydney while we were out in the *Biscuit* and said : "I think you ought to know that there is a good deal of talk going on about your wife spending so much time with Mr. Shaw."

Sydney was flabbergasted, never having dreamed of such a thing, and then threw back his head and roared with laughter. The well-meaning friend went away discomfited. Sydney told Tes, who laughed also ; and when the other members of the station heard the tale they were extremely indignant and threatened to duck whoever it was who had been "talking." We heard no more of it after that.

Discussing marriage one evening, Tes said, with one of his teasing, almost devilish looks : "You can never get perfection in a married couple : One is always better than the other." Sydney was there too, and we looked at each other and burst out laughing. Tes wouldn't be drawn any further. Sometimes, when he was in that mood, he would

enjoy leaving one up in the air—so to speak—wondering exactly what he meant when applying his remark to oneself . . . The “World’s Imp” was peeping out again !

But if anyone he cared for—and liking and affection grew slowly with him but endured—needed help or advice or just an atmosphere of serenity, he gave it in full measure. He helped many people ; one instance which is not generally known, is that he presented with great secrecy a fund drawn from his own hard-earned savings to the widow of one of the victims of the Iris III flying-boat crash. I knew about this, because I helped him to handle the case.

Just as his fellow aircraftmen took all their problems to him and he solved or helped them to solve them, so whenever a domestic crisis blew up and the cook left or I felt depressed and on edge, I would go across to see him over the Workshops and the clouds simply dissolved away, leaving a clear sky. He was so little personal, living his life as an ascetic and therefore detached from most of the pettinesses that hamper and beset us, so that he made one see the unimportance of whatever one was getting fussed or wrought up over. He could change an atmosphere and release tension in the air by a look or just by his manner of smiling and walking into the room.

All this I should miss terribly when, or if, we had to leave him behind at Mount Batten.

At last the day came when we knew Sydney

would hear if his promotion to Group-Captain had gone through, with its inevitable accompaniment of our having to move to another station. Tes and I decided to go for a run in the *Biscuit* and take a picnic supper—a last expedition we should take, probably, without the certain knowledge of disruption and change.

It was a perfect early July afternoon and we told Sydney to stand on the breakwater in the evening, when we should be coming home, and greet us with thumbs up, if his promotion had come through and thumbs down if not. Then we started out. Our object was Mount Edgcumbe, which we loved so dearly. We landed on a small shingle beach under the old fort of Picklecombe. The air was warm and still, the water hardly stirring. Now and then a huddle of silvery brits ruffled the surface as if little gusts of wind were playing round. We sat on the beach in the glowing light and the tiniest of baby waves lapped backward and forward just below us, making a gentle and monotonous music on the shingle.

We were silent for a long time. Then for a moment Tes had his gift of foretelling. His blue eyes looked into the future clearly as if in a crystal : “I see no real resting-place for you in the next five years : you won’t settle down anywhere and feel it is home.” How true this is I know now only too well.

Then we talked of him and his future, but he could see nothing for himself beyond leaving the

Air Force . . . "After that, life is a complete blank. I can see nothing whatever ahead." His perception was only too bitterly true.

Evening stole on. The colour and warmth faded out of sky and sea : we knew already that "The Golden Reign" was over. When we came in sight of the breakwater, we could just make out Sydney standing there, faithful to his promise. We were too far away to see whether his thumbs were up or down, but our hearts told us the truth—he had got his promotion and was to go to another Command.

Soon afterwards Tes went on leave and made straight for his lair in Westminster. Lately he had spent more than usual of his spare time "wrestling" (his word) with the *Odyssey*. It was a big task he had undertaken, and altogether it took him four years to complete, working as he did in his spare time.

He had the writer's usual ups and downs over the book. Sometimes he was pleased with it; more often it seemed a burden and so he criticized it over severely. But in his heart I know he liked it and felt it was good. Tes's original mind always broke through conventionality, and the translation is far from a conventional work. Colonel Isham, who had first thought of asking him to do it, certainly cannot have had in mind anything ordinary or conventional. He was sure that Tes's first-hand knowledge of its background, and his particular gifts and temperament, pointed to him as being the right person to make a new translation of the *Odyssey*.

After he left for London he heard we might not be sent to Manston after all. I wrote to him at once and told him this. In his reply he makes a

THE GOLDEN REIGN

revealing remark about how he valued certainty—even if this certainty was of something unhappy and to be endured.

14, BARTON STREET,  
WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.1.

*Telephone*, Victoria 9444.

*Telegrams*, Erbakera Parl London, 2.

No ink in house !                      3rd August, 1931.

Delightful little notepaper, this of Baker's. It is saving me hours of time, for to-day I am writing ten letters to answer what I got last week.

I searched all the French Gramophone Company's lists last week, at Imhof's and Van Wyk's, for a *Spiel Zigeuner* disc from the Contessa Maritza. No trace : and the selection is only Marek Weber, worthless. Was it a German record, do you think, or can you find out what Company made it ?

Otherwise I have hardly been out ; it is all *Odyssey* and I am sicker than ever of that great work. It does not go as well as I had hoped, and probably I shall only just get it through by the end of August.

I am sorry to hear of the further change of plan. It is time somebody learnt his own mind. What will they settle in the end, I wonder ? I value certainty, for myself, first of all gifts. Everything is bearable if you know it is fixed.

T. E. S.

Tes was pleased to call music and picnics and

quiet times in the country the "fleshpots," and when his publisher, Bruce Rogers, asked when he might expect the finished work, he gave for an excuse that the fleshpots, the *Biscuit* and Sydney were largely responsible for his having taken so long over it.

The lack of ink and Sir Herbert Baker's august notepaper amused him highly—but he didn't use it very often to me. His effort to try and finish the *Odyssey* took up so much of his time and energies that he was not inclined to write many letters. Usually his correspondence was enormous. I would find his table at Mount Batten littered with letters sometimes, and he once wrote to Sydney: "I'm in my usual state of a flooded table and few stamps!" As a matter of fact, he seldom used stamps but preferred already-stamped envelopes as a saving of time.

It is extraordinary how persistent complete strangers were in writing to him, even if they got no reply. And the Post Office often did a brilliant bit of detective work in sending strangely or inadequately addressed letters on to him. In looking through my papers, only the other day I came across an envelope from America, post-marked "Feb. 11th, 1931, N.J." It is addressed to "Lieutenant-Colonel T. E. Lawrence, London, England." This had been crossed out and "Try Aircraftman Shaw, Royal Air Force, Plymouth" written instead. It reached him all right, as I have it now.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

Knowing he was working night and day and had no one to look after him and see he got proper meals and rest, I wrote and suggested he should come down to Thurlestone—where we were staying—for a few days' respite in the middle of his leave. Here is his reply :

14, BARTON STREET.

12/VIII/31.

*Odyssey* creeps slowly over the ground, like a snake with glanders. I wonder if it will ever finish? Anyway, I shall not do a thing else that distracts me till it does finish. My working hours have reached seventeen a day! Unless you wire me to the contrary I shall leave here on Monday next (17th) and reach Mount Batten that evening: to stay for the two or three days you suggest and then ride back again. The C/O need not wire nor make any change in casualty forms; he can merely give me a new pass when this Lambe Cup (what for, in the name of Heaven?) is syllabussed.

No *Biscuit* till there is no Homer—I'm afraid. My Bank is quite firm about cheques now.

I should laugh if the Schneider fizzled yet! <sup>1</sup>

T. E. S.

He did come and we had a peaceful time and

<sup>1</sup> The Schneider Cup race announced for September, 1930, had been cancelled. In September, 1931, Flight-Lieutenant J. N. Bootham won the race for Great Britain with a speed of 340 m.p.h.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

several picnics in the fine August weather. Then he went back to his labours in Town before re-joining us at Mount Batten for our last precious weeks there.

## XXVI

I SPENT the last few weeks of our time at Mount Batten like a miser, grudging every moment spent. Late summer was always very tranquil, warm and beautiful there, and this August seemed even more beautiful still ; perhaps it is really my memory which paints it so and it was no more beautiful than all the other Augusts. But it was infinitely more precious now that sentence of banishment had been passed and I must drag up my roots and be transplanted to some strange place.

I felt I must look at every dearly loved spot again and experience its particular quality . . . the winding rivers up which we nosed our way in the *Biscuit*, the flowery grounds of Mount Edgcumbe, the secluded quarries and the little whispering beaches . . . the garden I had made and the house I had planned and lived in so happily. Any woman who reads this book and has had to leave a home where she has been more content than anywhere else will know exactly what I felt then.

Manston, it was rumoured, would only be a temporary station for us, and after an indefinite period, Sydney would probably be sent East—to Basra or Singapore. I tried to persuade Tes to

apply for a transfer. He was unhappy at our going and yet couldn't make up his mind whether he wanted to come with us or not. "Manston will be all right while you are there—but after you've gone I should be alone. Here I have friends and feel at home, but there I should be stranded. I don't really know what I want to do."

He was growing more and more wrapped up in speed-boats and was busy re-designing and improving them ; it would have been a pity to leave it all while it was in the process of maturing. Flight-Lieutenant Beauforte-Greenwood's belief in his work, dating from his first trials at Hythe, now gained him the encouragement and recognition of the Air Ministry. It would be far better for him to stay on at Mount Batten and complete this work of his own choosing. So I tried to persuade him no longer, but accepted the inevitable.

One morning when I was doing the flowers and filling the tall blue glass vase to stand in the corner of the drawing-room for the last time, Tes wandered in, appearing rather shy and awkward. In his hand was a large book. He laid it down on the table without a word and then looked round the room in an off-hand sort of way. I put down the flowers I was holding, wiped my hands dry and looked at the book. It was *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in the beautifully bound and very precious limited edition—a truly royal gift !

I glanced at him and saw that he didn't want the usual expressions of thanks. He ostentatiously

went over to the other side of the room, picking up something and examined it. I opened *Seven Pillars* and found on the fly-leaf this inscription : " From T. E. S. to S. W. S. on dissolution of partnership." Sydney must know of this generous gesture of Tes's at once. I telephoned to him and he came up to the house, simply delighted, but sad, too, that that parting was the reason for the gift.

The time of our departure came near. I was engaged in the laborious task of packing and I was sick at heart. The night before we were due to leave I developed a temperature and felt very seedy indeed. I suppose it was a mixture of being over-tired and unhappy at leaving. At any rate I was not well enough to go the next day and in fact spent several days in bed. Sydney and Squeak went off by train and took most of the household goods with them.

At last my temperature went down and I was well enough to make the journey. I got up very early, packed my last remaining things, and Tes and the two dogs and I got into the car and drove off. It was only seven o'clock in the morning, so I was spared many trying farewells, as the place was deserted. Only one Squadron-Leader very nobly emerged in his dressing-gown to wish me *bon-voyage*. It was a horrid drizzly morning ; I didn't dare to take a last look at Mount Batten for fear I should disgrace myself. The day itself was weeping gently and softly and I didn't want to do the same.

But after a bit the sun broke through, and though it was early October, there was a warmth in it which still echoed summer. Our spirits rose too, and soon Tes was talking to me of the things and scenes we passed in his usual cheerful manner, and made me forget my depression. We found an exquisite spot high up on a hill overlooking a green Somerset valley near Wincanton in which to eat our picnic breakfast, while the dogs rushed about exploring and rabbiting.

Through Dorset we drove, without taking time to make a detour to visit Clouds Hill, and on to the New Forest where we stopped and ate our lunch in a beech glade, just turning golden-yellow. We were quiet then, I remember, not talking much and deliberately avoiding mentioning Mount Batten. Tes brought out of his pocket the dogs' lunches; each had the same meal wrapped up in grease-proof paper. These he undid and fed them first.

We still had many miles to go, so we pushed on, stopping for tea at a little inn. I began to feel done up after my illness. We drove on and at last I felt I could go no farther. Tes was most concerned and sympathetic, and seeing a nice-looking inn, the "Swan" at Charing, he suggested we should have dinner and that I should stop the night. "I know I ought to drive," he said, "but that's just the thing I feel I can't do." I stumbled out of the car, feeling more dead than alive, and we walked into the inn; Tes a few paces behind me. "You know,

I always try to look like your chauffeur, but I don't seem to succeed." Sure enough he didn't succeed ! His air of diffidence couldn't hide the intangible and arresting something about his personality, and people always stared. Sometimes they recognized him, sometimes they didn't ; but the sight of me, two dogs and Tes, an ordinary aircraftman, but having the air of something more, always roused interest.

During dinner I revived and felt I could just manage to drive the last two hours on. We left at half-past eight and arrived at my new home, Pouces Farm, Manston, before ten, to find Sydney waiting impatiently for us, anxious that I hadn't been able to stand the long drive. In the kindness of his heart and thinking we should be cold—both hating cold extremely—he had shut all the windows, put on the central heating and had every fire in the house lit. The result was that it was like a furnace ; we couldn't breathe after our long day in the fresh air, and in spite of Sydney's feelings I simply had to rush and open the windows. Tes laughed like anything at this.

I saw too, as soon as I got in, that Sydney had unpacked my things and put them all over the place. It was again the kindest of thoughts, but even in my worn-out condition I remember feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of changing everything round. But I restrained my impulse to say : " Oh, Sydney, you've put everything in the wrong place ! " and tried to show him my appreciation for

his kind thought. I was too tired to do it very well, I'm afraid.

Tes used to tease me about my passion for arranging houses. "Sydney has only to put up a picture for you to come along and say, 'Oh, no, dear, that looks awful!' And immediately take it down and put it somewhere else. Now you know why I don't get married!"

## XXVII

I WAS thankful to get to bed that night. Next day I felt better and more able to cope with the planning and arranging of our new home. Pouces Farm was a beautifully proportioned house with genuine Adams mantelpieces and ceilings, rebuilt from an old farmhouse. The drawing-room was particularly satisfying in its height and width and shape generally—a long room with an Adams fireplace at the end. But for all its beauty it could never be the home “The Fisherman’s Arms” had been to me, and I was half-hearted in my efforts to make it the kind of home I like to have.

Tes stayed a fortnight with us and helped me in every way he could. “You want more colour in this room,” he announced one day, looking at the drawing-room with a critical eye. “Especially at the end of the room . . . a picture would do the trick. Come on, let’s dash up to London and raid my pictures.” This was the sort of spur-of-the-moment thing that appeals to me. We started off in the car and drove to a house in St. John’s Wood where he kept some of his pictures and many of his most precious books.

He spent a long time there. He showed me his

favourite books and we browsed among them and discussed them for ages. Some of them were missing : borrowers, as usual, had forgotten to return them, and he refers to his feelings over this in a letter written later on, taking himself to task that he should be so far short of Gandhi in caring about the loss of his possessions. It was very few possessions that Tes valued at all ; he took only a small dispatch case about with him when he went on leave, and he shared all music, his gramophone and his records with us and with his barrack companions. But books he did value as something more personal and owned many beautiful ones—the Chaucer Bible being the most prized.

He chose three of his pictures to give me—a very gracious oil-painting of boys bathing by the sea-shore by Tuke, an Augustus John, the figure of a young man, and the Kennington pastel that he called “The Cheshire Cat.” We brought them back and hung them, and two of them travelled everywhere with me since. The third, the Kennington, Tes decided he did not like and he would not let me have it, although I said I liked it. “No, I can’t stand it grinning away like that . . . I won’t let you keep it.” So that was that.

Sydney told him of the improvements he was planning to make at Manston. At Sydney’s instigation the Mount Batten buildings had been painted beige and green. The barracks at Manston were a dull dark brown . . . “You’ll soon change that,” said Tes. “I hope you’ll go for green

again ; it's one of my favourite colours." It was, we both loved the real colours of nature—"natural and unobtrusive" he called them.

"Well, it'll have to be done in stages," said Sydney. "But you'll notice a change when you come here next," and he certainly kept his word.

They talked of the work they had done together and Tes sought out any men who had been at Mount Batten and came back to the house very pleased, saying : "I've seen So-and-So."

I could tell what this separation from Sydney was to mean to Tes and noticed that he clung to the time they had worked together so harmoniously at Mount Batten. Sydney, too, would miss him. "There's a lot to be done here," said Sydney ; "I wish I had you to help me." In one of his future visits to Manston Tes said : "The spirit of Mount Batten is beginning to show itself here." He couldn't have paid Sydney a finer compliment.

When the fortnight was almost over and he had to go back to Plymouth he became quiet, rather like a child who doesn't want to go back to school, but won't admit it. As for me, I couldn't imagine being without his daily companionship, and it was only after he had left that the realization came to me of what his absence meant, and I felt completely lost. Just before he left Tes caught sight of one of the little blue rugs issued to married officers' quarters, with the R.A.F. monogram in the middle.

"That's just what I want for the cottage."

"Take it, by all means," said Sydney, and

kneeling down, he rolled it up and handed it to Tes. The sight of a Group-Commander kneeling down and giving a homely domestic object like a rug to an ordinary aircraftman amused Tes so much that he walked away chuckling, quite changing the atmosphere from sadness to amusement. The rug is at Clouds Hill now, and only the other day I saw a picture of it lying in front of the fireplace.

I'm afraid that after he left I wrote him daily letters, long and grumbling, trailing on about how I missed him and his help. He seemed interminably slow in answering, and when his first letter came it pointed out that there was always something bright in every situation. This didn't make me feel any better, but I pulled myself together and didn't bore him with grumbling any more than I could help. But he knew it was a "safety valve" and always understood. The following letter to me shows that he was not particularly happy either :

27.X.3.

I am sorry to be so slow in answering. First there was the uncertainty about myself, which turned me into a wandering Jew for some days : and then the feeling that after all I might press my roots in again.

The reason I would not ask to move was because I knew it would be refused. There is a definite instruction laid down (by S. of S.)<sup>1</sup> against my posting to any station in the London district.

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State for Air.

Kent counts, I think, as a home county, Margate being a seaside branch of London. I have been told that I may go to Leuchars, if I like. I do not like.

Since life is all growing roots and tearing them up every time I reach a new station, I vow that I will not put down roots, to save pain—but the things grow in the dark, all unknowing.

You will even like Manston in time, without (I hope) ceasing to regret Mount Batten.

This place seems to have lost something. We go about as usual, but there is no sense of direction or effort. In your day, it was so happy and contented.

The *Biscuit* is in her shed. She will not run much now, for reasons of money. For that I am glad that I stay here. Manston would have cost me more than I have. . . .

Sydney and I both reiterated our wish that he might be posted to Manston, but though he was lonely and not happy at Mount Batten under changed circumstances, he had excellent reasons for not applying for a transfer. His references to many sides of our former life there made me go away by myself for a long time with the dogs for silent companions, not very sure of my self-control. Home-sickness is a treacherous enemy, hitting below the belt and hard to withstand.

This same letter went on :

These next few years are going to be scraping times for people with fixed incomes. I think my bike.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

The next week-end must fall through. Wing-Commander Burling is away in London. He went days ago, before I could ask him, and is not yet back. They think he will be here on Thursday, which is too late to put in for it. Will you try again (or ask the G/C to try again) later? Remember that passes and leaves are not so sensible here as they were. The absence of the cat has let the mice make rules.

I've been twice to Barbican to see your fisherman, but without luck. The fleet is out for herrings, probably that is why.

Acland has two dog combs of yours. Sergeant Pitt would very much like that exchange, or posting to Manston, if it can be worked. Stacey is very grateful for his reference.

I wish the old state could be restored. I shall always remember Mount Batten.

Please regard me to Squark, to Leo and to William ; and again to Leo. I hope he is burrless now.

It will be a great pleasure to fly down to you sometime. S/L Jones has promised me a lift in the first Iris to go ; but that will be summer time, I suppose.

S.

Tes and I used to talk to the fishermen whose small boats tied up at our jetty and they often gave us some of their catch. "My fisherman" was a little hunchback and a special friend of mine, and

when I said good-bye, he said : " We'll never get another lady like you." " Squark " was, of course, Squeak and " William," the golden cocker, Billy, grandly addressed by his full name. Tes always picked burrs out of the dogs' coats—hence his reference to Leo and his hope that he is " burrless now."

Sydney, knowing how he felt and missing his invaluable services as personal clerk, wrote to thank Tes for all the help he had given him at Mount Batten. Tes was evidently touched by this, and wrote in reply :

MOUNT BATTEN.

4.XI.31.

DEAR GROUP-CAPTAIN SMITH,

I should have answered your letter of October 29, but I'm in my usual state of a flooded table and few stamps. It is very nice of you to say these things : but I have thoroughly enjoyed these last  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years at Mount Batten, so that no thanks are due. Incidentally, you will be glad to hear that things are still comfortable.

As for my going to Manston—I realized early on that it was unlikely : and therefore I couldn't well suggest it or press it. It's bad tactics to have a request refused : but of course it didn't matter Biffy's being refused. I think Calshot is about the nearest I could get to the London area, at present. It is not the fault of the C.A.S. but directions about me are on my documents, and he cannot be expected

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

to bother the government for permission to shift me, without strong *service* cause.

Wing-Commander Burling has had a letter from you, making the arrangements foreshadowed in Mrs. Smith's letter. I'll be at 14, Barton Street by 5 p.m. on Friday week, the 13th, unless I hear to the contrary. You must really return me on the Monday, this time ! I mustn't overstay my leave too often.

The fishermen from Barbican send their respects, and S/Ldr. Lloyd some hate ! S/Ldr. Jones will tell you about the Iris-Buzzard developments. It has been too rough here for the smaller aircraft lately. The *Biscuit* is serviceable again, after a week of waiting for a distributor part. But she will not run yet awhile. I have been using the bike quite a little, and reading a lot.

I told Sergt. Pitt that you were intending to try for him soon. He hopes that the transfer will include a hope of married quarters, and is very keen on the move.

S/M Furner is warned for Iraq. So soon there will be not a shred of the old Workshops remaining. He goes in January.

Yours sincerely,

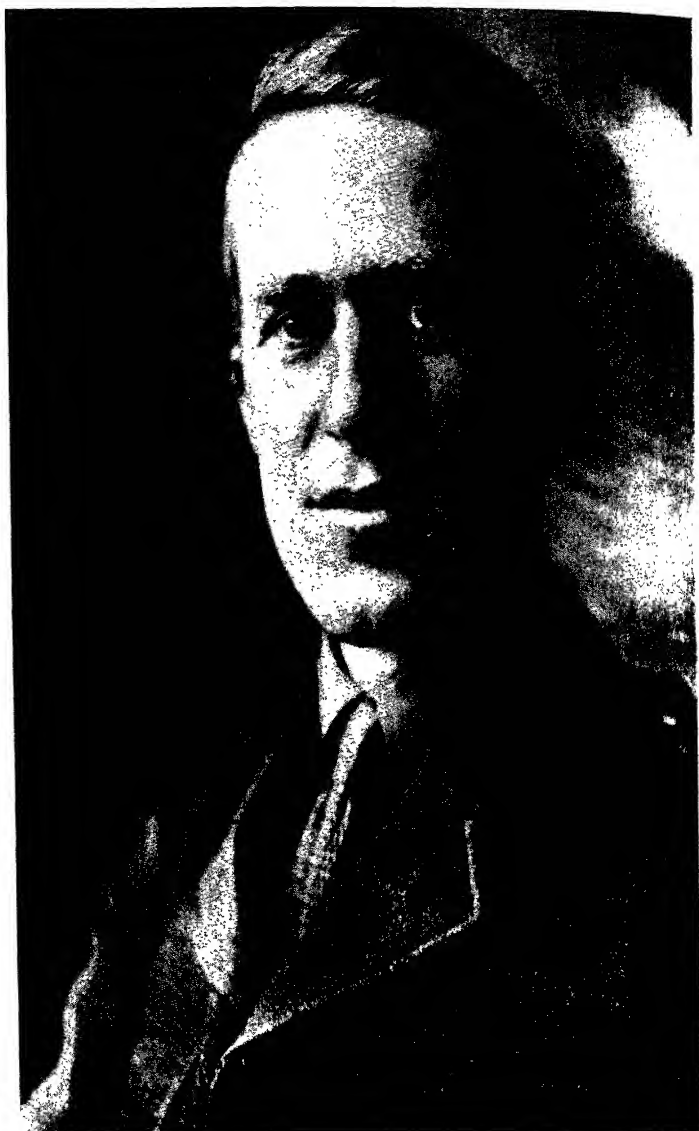
T. E. S.



PAINTING OF T. E. S. BY H. S. TUKE, R.A.



MODEL OF THE *GOLDEN HIND*



*Topical*

T. E. LAWRENCE

## XXVIII

SOON after we settled down in Manston, Lord Carlow came here to take a course of night flying. Somehow, although he was dark, he reminded me in personality of Tes. He, too, was small and boyish and young-looking and, as a pilot, his outstanding qualities were complete mastery of his machine and absolute fearlessness combined with a cool head and sound judgment. He, too, loved books and fine printing and created a private Press—the Corvinus Press—which was something Tes had always dreamed of doing. He loved scenery and poetry and music: they had so many tastes in common that they should be friends, I thought.

I was right. They liked each other the moment they met and had a close friendship which lasted till Tes's death. On that tragic day Lord Carlow had a sudden strong conviction that something was wrong. He motored down to Clouds Hill and was just in time to see Tes, unconscious, carried into the camp hospital . . .

They met first at Salcombe, near Plymouth. Lady Clementine Waring invited Sydney, Lord Carlow and myself for a week-end. She also asked Tes to go the next day from Mount Batten for lunch.

It was here the two men met and at once became friends.

Tes took me for two expeditions in the *Biscuit* while I was staying at Salcombe. We revisited all our old haunts, or at least as many as we could ; I was greedy and wanted to see as many as we could possibly fit in. As we were stealing quietly up the Lynher, I tried to imagine that the Golden Reign still existed unchanged. But I knew it was over and could never return. The quarry, under its autumn tints, was the same as before and even the sheep browsing on the opposite bank looked as if they hadn't moved since we were there last. It was we humans who had been forcibly changed by circumstances, to our infinite regret.

After this, Tes only went out once in the *Biscuit*, and this merely to try her out ; his enthusiasm for her seemed to have gone. I think he felt it would only have brought back memories of our pleasant trips together. Later on he wrote from Hythe : " It was very sad being at Plymouth and on the water there as the only survivor of our parties—I was glad to get away." He was not in the *Biscuit* but was demonstrating a new type of motor-boat in which the Admiralty were interested.

Three years ago Lord Carlow paid Tes a tribute by privately printing in exquisite form two appreciations of him. The title *Lawrence of Arabia* covered both " Lawrence : the Artist in War and Letters," by Captain Liddell Hart, and " Lawrence : Himself," by Sir Ronald Storrs. The year after, he

printed Tes's Syrian diary, kept when he explored Syria on foot in 1911.

I had a promised visit from Tes to look forward to at Manston. In spite of difficulties he managed to come and one of the first things we did together was to explore a tunnel and some dug-outs in the Kentish chalk near Pouces Farm. Manston was on the direct route to London for German bombers in 1914-18 and was itself bombed once. Primitive underground shelters were made and cement steps led us from the front door of our house right into one of these. It was really very simple in construction, just a tunnel, twenty feet below ground, coming out by the tennis-court which had been made where the old farmyard once stood.

This tunnel dug-out became a show place for our visitors. We took them down to see the relics of war-time occupation—broken plates and seats hewn out of the white chalk. Evidently people went down with their food and stayed there till the "All Clear" sounded, eating their meals in safety, but hardly in comfort! Now it was the haunt of rabbits, and probably rats too, though I never saw one. Tes took Leo into the tunnel to hunt, and one day when I went in with them a rank smell greeted our noses. We went further in to investigate, carrying lights, and Tes found a dead cat. The poor creature, after the way of its kind, had crept into a dark and lonely place to die. He carried it out by its tail and we gave it decent burial in the garden.

After this visit it was three weeks before I got a

letter from him, but I guessed that he might have gone to Hythe, where he would be caught up in a busy world of speed-boat designing and testing. This was just what had happened, and he was back working in Scott Paine's yard and staying with Mrs. Biddlecombe at Myrtle Cottage :

HYTHE : 7.XII.31.

I hope you have guessed that I have been here, and up to my eyes and ears in it.

Got to Plymouth from you on Tuesday. On Wednesday at noon left for Hythe, where we have been (Cpl. Bradbury and I) for nearly three weeks. I think the dinghy engine we are testing is the real thing. It has done 70 hours without a blemish, ticks over like a watch, and does 22 m.p.h. full out. Some dinghy ! We loaded it with a ton of iron ballast, and drove it across to Southampton and back, like that !

Another week or less should see us back in Plymouth. I came by Brough and hope to call in at my cottage (still inhabited,<sup>1</sup> alas) on the way back, if there is time. It is a pity that these tests are always such a rush.

Good to hear that you and he and it (apologies to the Squawk) are better. I am fool-proof and waterproof, I fancy. At least I have been wet for a fortnight, and going strong.

About your carpet that went astray. I could not

<sup>1</sup> Tes sometimes lent Clouds Hill to his mother or youngest brother.

clear that up the night I spent at Batten : but I got Acland and Winen on to it. They remember it being stencilled with an address (not Manston) in stores, and sent back to the house. It was not left there after you went, and is not there now. I asked them to find out from Price if it was despatched by rail by him.

The mistake of your address (S. of T.T.) was the wooden-headed Post-Corporal's.

About that other move. I cannot help about it. I have never asked for a change, except for reasons that were unselfish, and cannot begin to plead for favours. That would be against my grain. You must see that as I do. If I got to Manston on those terms it would not feel nice. Service life is all making and losing friends, a wandering. I shall not dispose of myself and grow fixed till 1935. Only this is 1932, almost. It grows fearfully near.

Please regard me to S. and s. and give poor Leo two rations of coffee sugar. Tell him I shall see him next year—which is not long.

T. E. S.

From them on—November, 1931, and until after Easter, 1932—Tes was working like a navvy at Hythe and our friendship had to be carried on by means of letters—plenty from me and more intermittent ones from him. Although I was always asking him to come to Manston for week-ends, his work and other circumstances prevented it all but once or twice. I felt restless and missed his com-

panionship and our music and picnics. Without having to talk much he was so stimulating that now I felt I must take up something, some work or hobby, to fill the gap.

If Sydney went to Basra and left me behind, should I try film work? I had always wanted to see what the inside of a film studio was like and what mysterious processes blank celluloid went through to be turned into a talking film. Perhaps Bernard Shaw or Noel Coward could help me? Tes knew them both well.

His reply was guarded and not encouraging in tone. Talking about it afterwards, he strongly advised me to give up the idea. "People in studios are too artificial, and it's hard to jump in unless you are very young." In fact, I knew he strongly disapproved, so I accepted his advice and took up fencing instead. I loved it and it proved a great solace to me. Squeak went to a day school and our life flowed on quietly and uneventfully. Tes's letters to me at that time speak for themselves without further explanation :

MYRTLE COTTAGE,  
JOHN STREET,  
HYTHE,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

27 Jan. 1932.

This is scandalous. I have just realized that it is weeks since I wrote to anyone, and there is a litter of papers expecting action all round me.

Your first letter was difficult for me to answer. I could talk to you better, I think. Noel Coward is in S. America, and G. B. S. in S. Africa, so that time does not press. Perhaps we can leave it till I see you next.

I have taken root in Hythe, almost. The Air Ministry want to adopt a hydraulic oil-motor engagement of gears, in the 200 class, and for weeks we have been re-designing and modifying the systems offered us. I hope it is nearly finished. It has been very difficult.

I have orders, also, to write a handbook on the 200 boats. This shows me how little I know. Between these jobs my days and my nights are wholly occupied. Hence I neglect everything else. No music ; no books. All work, they say, is dulling. At least it leaves me unconscious of time and neighbours.

I hope Manston is not dragging in these winter days. If only I could give you half my work !

Last Saturday I saw S/M Furner off on the troopship for Basra. He was cheerfully expecting the G/C to get there *this year*. Have you any news ?

S/Ldr. Lloyd's fat brother is flying a new Sarou amphibian at Calshot.

When my toils finish themselves—or I finish them—I shall try for you again. A Moth could land at Hamble, I think ?

T. E. S.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

MYRTLE COTTAGE,  
JOHN STREET,  
HYTHE,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

*Thursday 5 (?) Feb.*

F/Lt. Beauforte-Greenwood and party have been here all day, and I have not stopped running about. There is a lot to do when they are here : and when they are not.

My immediate duty is to compile a handbook upon the 37½ foot R.A.F. cruiser by Sunday night. As this is a month's job, I shall be very much in need of your prayers ! So I have wired to say that this week-end is out of the question.

On Monday I am to go to Plymouth, for 2 or 3 days : then to London for 2 or 3 days : that brings me to the week-end. If I can get to London, all well and good. I can Manston easily : just for Sat. night, I expect. Or I may have to return here. It depends on the progress the shipyard make, meanwhile, on their latest job.

November is a long time, and something may be possible between now and then.

I wish life in Hythe was easier. I work all day on the boats or in the yard ; and at night with reports or logs or handbook. No music : no books : no rides. Too much motor-boating !

I will let you know as soon as I know myself, about futures. All I can see now is that I am hard

THE GOLDEN REIGN

at work till Sunday night. It will be a real rush to get through.

Yrs.

T. E. S.

MYRTLE COTTAGE,  
JOHN STREET,  
HYTHE,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

15.2.32.

Bang goes this week-end, too. I am to proceed to Redhill by road, taking with me the completed draft of my handbook to the 200 class of R.A.F. seaplane tenders . . . and to go on to London next Monday on the same business. That is that!

I have finished the new dinghy testing: the Hyland control testing: and (almost) the handbook. Remains the handing over of the 17 new boats of the 200 class (two weeks hard work) and the testing of an experimental boat (two ditto . . .).

Working on one's own gives no excuse for week-ends. Week-ends are only plausible when everybody takes them, as in camp. Here, at Hythe, they seem quite "inadmissible."

However, I will report lack of progress steadily until the free Saturday dawns: and then, heigh for Hamble (or will it rain?)!

T. E. S.

How the weeks lengthen out. I came in the end of November.

My *Notes of the 200 Class* are finished : a small book of about 40 pages, I expect : and they may appear as an Air Ministry Publication. That will make me laugh, if it does. I am revising them now, for submission to the Publication Department, and preparing an index. Ever so dull, the notes, and entirely impersonal. Nobody could guess that anybody had written them. They seem just to have collected themselves.

Now we are testing these 16 boats : and hope by Easter to have passed them all out. Easter is the first possible date for finishing. It means one every day, and two on some days, I hope, but do not feel too sure of managing so much.

After Easter there are 9 dinghies to test : and one of them the refuelling dinghy, to be exhaustively tested in all weathers. I see myself getting wet again.

After that, in April, there are two target boats to test. That is a new proposition and should be curious and perhaps exciting.

After that there is nothing at all, and I hope for Plymouth. Not the *Biscuit*, particularly. I shall be half-dead of motor-boating, and longing for books and armchairs and fleshpots.

A queer mixed life mine is.

You will see how difficult it is for me to say anything definite about Manston for the moment.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

After Easter . . . yes ; I think after Easter. I should get at least a week-end. But until the 16 boats are passed, not a day or hardly an hour.

The irony was that I lately spent 5 days in London, and did nothing—saw nobody. All the time I was in E.6 typing these blessed *Notes on the etc.* and answering questions about them and other boats.

I become learned about boats, and meanwhile, there are no books, no music, no easements. But George Brough have swapped my bike for a new one, a beauty ; if only I had time to ride it.

Lately I nearly sent you two Turkish rugs : but had mercy. They were so dirty, and so threadbare. Even Leo would have found them stringy under-paw. Please give them a double ration of coffee sugar to-morrow night. They will have forgotten me before I come.

My regards to the Squawk : I hope Manston is growing more like a home for its airmen. By the way, did you get poor Sergt. Pitt along ?

Yours,

T. E. S.

## XXIX

THE work that Tes did with motor-boats has been described to me by experts as "invaluable." His acute observations and personal contact with the service power-boats used at Mount Batten made him of the opinion that their general design might be materially improved. They could be made more seaworthy by being a trifle higher out of the water ; they should have a faster speed so they' could go to the scene of a crash more quickly ; and at the same time they should be more economical of crew. In the existing type of boat one man was needed to look after the engine, another to steer and a third to attend to the mooring and other jobs allotted to a deck-hand.

Tes made out specifications of a new boat which could be manned by a crew of two only—an important saving. The throttle and steering were connected so that they could be worked by the same pilot, while the second member of the crew attended to the deck jobs. This design was aimed especially at filling the needs of the Air Force and the Air Ministry, though Flight-Lieutenant Beauforte-Greenwood accepted the specification in 1931, while Tes was still at Mount Batten. Now at

Hythe he was assisting in the construction of this boat—the first 200 class power-boat—and later in its testing. He had also had to write a book of notes on boats of the 200 class for the Ministry. It proved to be a document of scientific engineering interest, although he says : “ Ever so dull, the notes, and entirely impersonal. Nobody could guess that anybody had written them. They seem just to have collected themselves.”

The R.A.F. adopted the new type of boat and four years later the Admiralty followed suit and introduced motor-boats of the same design for use in rescue work in the Navy. To many people who think that Tes's real achievements and life's work ended at the finish of the Arabian campaign, it will be a surprise, perhaps, to know of this important and constructive contribution of his to one side of the R.A.F. and the Navy. It was not a spectacular contribution from the general public's point of view, but improvement and progress are made possible by just such almost anonymous contributions as these. It pleased me to think that Tes had gained much of his first-hand and intimate knowledge of speed-boats and their machinery through our friend, the *Biscuit* : in fact, the *Biscuit* was the foundation on which Tes worked.

In April, 1932, he went up to Donibristle in Scotland to see a new 200 boat, and as soon as he got back to Hythe he had to rush off to Felixstowe. He wrote then that he might be able to come to us for the night on his way through. But again we

were disappointed. An engine broke down, he says in a letter written afterwards, and he could only reach Dover instead of getting on to Ramsgate for the night. Next day he had to drive straight to Felixstowe. It was very sad : we both knew that our time together was short, and we always snatched at any precious days we could get. In spite of general opinion, and even of his own, he liked regular food, and a certain amount of ease in life, which always seemed to evade him, and he was forced into uncomfortable corners and conditions.

23.IV.32.

I strike at the date blindly, for the feel of the weather is almost May-like.

At Donibristle they kept me for an age, telling them all about their new boat, and showing them target-towing, etc.

One engine broke down on the way to Felixstowe. So instead of Ramsgate for the night, we could only make Dover : and the next day had to drive straight for Felixstowe. It was annoying to pass all along the Forelands and not be able to call ! A good trip, otherwise.

I'm glad the Manston interlude is to end quickly. Basra ought to be a pleasant command : not that Basra itself seemed to me a very attractive spot. I can't help you about a house, for I cannot think of anyone there I knew (except A/C Welch !), and S/M Furner has not written to me since he sailed. I expect they know his whereabouts at Batten, but

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

I seem to be banished from that ! It is sad, with the summer coming, to be away from it all. My job here is likely to last till late June, and it gets more, instead of less, occupying. Sometimes I like it, and another time everything goes wrong.

Sea coast . . . and cottages ? That is very hard. In our run to Scotland we saw hundreds of miles of blank beaches, as if nobody lived near the sea : but that is an illusion, surely.

My head is like a pudding. That long night in the train, & four days of rushing between here & London since I got back have done me up rather. I would like a few days inland, and a chair, & books, and regular food. Instead I now go out to try a dinghy !

Yours,

T. E. S.

HYTHER : *May 19.*

I scribble a line to-night to my two female correspondents—Mrs. Shaw and Mrs. Smith—to warn them that “ dinghies ” are “ up.” I do about ten hours in them & on them daily, and that will go on till all 8 are as perfect as the Works can be persuaded into making them.

In the intervals of leisure I look after the little tank boat, and the two armoured boats.

On June 4 I am to come to Dover with the little tank boat, for it to refuel 20 Squadron during their six-weeks attachment to Dover. That sounds to me like Manston for a week-end. I shall be free

for at least 24 hours then—and not afterwards till July.

The news about Basra is good, on thinking it over. If it must be, then the sooner the better.

I'm sorry about Whitsun. I spent it yachting—in three dinghies, to be exact. Quite hard work, too, for one of them was addled.

T. E. S.

We gave him an open invitation to come whenever he liked or could get away ; week-ends were always being arranged and cancelled at the last moment. This was almost worse than having no hope of seeing him at all, but as Tes had foretold that evening at Mount Edgcumbe, I was to have no settled feeling or home for some years to come, and he was right, as usual.

HYPHE : 23.VI.32.

It goes on. Good that I wired cancelling that week-end ; for the boat only got to Beachy Head and there swamped itself. We put into Newhaven and returned by road. Since, I have been running trials of the two target boats and over-timing, as usual. It must be a defect in my make-up which compels me to be too keen upon the matter in hand. The Basra boat of the 200 class is still here, waiting its copper sheathing. The Admiralty held the business up for months. I hope it may be shipped in August.

About Trenchard. You are mistaken. Since

THE GOLDEN REIGN

he resigned, his opinion has not once been asked about an Air Force matter—or expressed. The Air Staff made it a clean cut. He is sorry about it. So he cannot help Biffy. I wish something might be done, but cannot do it myself. That would make things worse, I fear.

Yours,

T. E. S.

Marvellous weather, this month. Think of the foxgloves in our quarry. They must be perfect. Poor *Biscuit*: dry in her shed.

MOUNT BATTEN: 7.XI.32.

This is written in a hurry, between breakfast and work. I will try & write better in a few days, when I send you a copy of my beastly *Odyssey*, which is just on the point of appearing.

I can't come next week-end. There is an income-tax case of the R.A.F. Memorial Fund down for hearing on Friday & Saturday (11th and 12th, I think) and I am to stand-to as witness, in London.

Singapore is good news. I believe it is interesting, pleasant, comfortable . . . but a very expensive place. Better than the Persian Gulf, as a living station. Not so interesting & historic as an area to supervise.

I had a hectic and curious time at Hythe, Bridlington, Calshot, Dover and what not (including Donibristle in Scotland!) during my motor-boat

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

period. It came to an end suddenly, owing to an article in a Sunday newspaper, which frightened the Air Ministry. When S. is C.A.S. do ask him not to be easily frightened of the Press.

Batten has not changed, outwardly. I am now in Marine Section and working mainly on engines.

Enough. Everybody else is getting up & rushing up and down, clearing the hut. I must, too.

T. E. S.

Tes had suddenly written from Mount Batten. I was surprised, as I knew he expected to be at Hythe for some weeks longer. But from his letter it seemed that the "tin-can" of his fame was tied to him as if "to a dog's tail."

I had written to tell him that Sydney's next command was to be Singapore. That meant that I should be going too. For Sydney's sake I was delighted; Singapore was a good station and his command an important one, but my own feelings about leaving England and Tes were strangely mixed. I had almost a sense of foreboding about going so far away. I suggested London as a common meeting-ground one day, so that we might talk and perhaps hear some music together . . .

PLYMOUTH : 17.XI.32.

I can't say yet about London. You must realize that Batten is not what it was. Week-ends are back to normal, from noon Saturday till midnight Sun-

day. That only gives me from 6.30 p.m. on Sat. till 2 p.m. on Sunday in London. Not enough for my useful purpose.

I saw Elgar last Summer. He greatly praised his newly recorded violin concerto by Menuhin, which is being played again in the Albert Hall this Sunday. He played us some of the records and they were magnificent. He is also well on with his 3rd Symphony! Ours is his second. Don't publish this fact.

The *Odyssey* has gone towards you. Don't be severe on the feeble thing.

Yesterday I went down and put her battery into the *Biscuit* and pressed the button. The engine turned over well. No petrol, of course, but a fortnight might see her going again. W/Cmdr. Burling has just bought an 8-metre sailing yacht, now at Falmouth, and (is) coming up (in) her soon. That gives him 4 boats here and two in Scillies.

About Christmas . . . how do you stand? I spend it in Batten, and hope to get to London just after it: for my bike has to be registered and insured, etc., before Dec. 31st. Don't know yet what we will get for leave then: perhaps five days. Of course you will probably be in Burton.<sup>1</sup>

Am I dreaming, or is your du Gros sister going to be married? "Pat" it was. Somebody told me.

I'm so glad it is Singapore. An interesting station, and a quick one. Only he will be

<sup>1</sup> Sydney's old home.

A/Commodore before his term ends. Will that bring him home? Geoffrey Salmond's forthcoming elevation delights me. I want so many changes made right away in the R.A.F. (Geneva permitting !)

What about Biffy? <sup>1</sup> Napier's sounded good: I hope he is happier.

T. E. S.

The *Odyssey* came, inscribed: "For two Esses from an Ess. Part fruits of what leisure hours they gave him in the Golden Reign." Evidently he was thankful it was published at last, as he had felt it a drag on him for some time.

Christmas! That was something to hold on to. Could we get him to promise us Christmas? I wrote again and tried to tie him down to a promise. I mentioned the books I had been reading, too. We always discussed our reading together, though our tastes were not always alike by any means. Tes enjoyed modern poetry and was interested in its technique and form as well as its content. I prefer traditional poetry. "I like Laura Riding's poetry!" he said once. "It has feeling in it; and it's feeling that counts." I thought when I read *Grey Wolf* that he would be interested in it because of its subject. He admired Kemal Ataturk tremendously, chiefly for his magical

<sup>1</sup> Air Commodore A. E. Borton joined the Staff of D. Napier & Sons, the aero-engine manufacturers of Acton.

work of constructing a vital modern state, a going concern, out of the shreds of the old Turkish Empire. He liked reality rather than fantasy in his reading, though the scrupulous craftsman in him was always critical of style.

PLYMOUTH : 26.XI.32.

We (that is the other ranks of Mount Batten) have had a disappointment. We counted on the usual Christmas grant, with a substitute for those who did not take it, later : but yesterday notice came round that only the Monday & Tuesday are to be given, and no later alternative. So that rules me out. I am sorry, for it has been months since I saw you two. The other people, who had hoped to go home for Christmas, are sorry too, in their way. It makes it a little difficult for me to register my motor-bike, too.

I haven't read *Grey Wolf*. I know Armstrong, the man who wrote it. Should I read it? Kemal is a remarkable person, rather too successful.

Your dance sounds like a riot. I hope *both* of you enjoyed it enormously, and that no one trod on Leo's tail. Commend me to Leo.

Good about Biffy.

Gerald Kelly does paint Spanish things and people, usually. At least, he prefers brunettes. He paints well, but not well enough to be interesting : or so I think. Not to be sneezed at, if free of charge, but not to be paid for, unless you are very rich. His work is very decorative. I expect he is a good

judge of a Ball. If he picks on you, then I shall not congratulate you with both sides of my mouth.

The present Duchess is all very well, in her way and as Duchesses go : but the beautiful one was Millicent, who remarried several times, afterwards, and must now be quite old and no longer a Duchess. She and her daughter were both lovely : but Millicent was witty and wise too.

You wouldn't find that " back label " of T. E. S. much use now. Every dog has his day, I suppose, and mine lasted for years. That was more than I earned. The C/C cannot help it. He likes pulling legs : and it is a growing and attractive habit. Sometimes I almost feel tempted to indulge in it myself.

G. B. S. has gone off round the world on the *Empress of Britain*. Everybody wonders what he will do in America, which he has always refused to visit ! It would be like the old man to take a boat home from Panama to miss the States. He would not have judged your Ball, anyway. The stern old moralist disapproves of us.

I've never seen Lady X . . . She was a sort of traffic light for artists at one time : but my sort only saw the red side of her.

The Elgar Symphony still lies in your old house. I daren't carry records on my bike, and they are difficult to post. If you have a car at Salcombe, why not call for it ? The Menuhin records of his Concerto are marvellous. Old Elgar himself played some of them to us last summer.

The *Biscuit* has not yet been asked to run. There is more mending up than I had realized. By Christmas, perhaps.

T. E. S.

The Ball he refers to was a charity affair at the Dorchester which Laila Stanley Smith organized. It was to be Spanish in character and the well-known portrait painter, Gerald Kelly, presented a large blank canvas and promised to paint on it the portrait of "the most Spanish looking woman present." I did *not* qualify.

We had ourselves given the "riot of a dance" at Manston. A naval squadron was visiting and enjoyed themselves at it hugely. We had extra "help" in to assist with the refreshments and at the end of the dance when we were sitting talking, Ethel, our family cook, who by virtue of an original character and long service says and does much as she wants on occasions and who has never approved of "outside help," came in to report with indignation the disappearance of two cold ducks that she had been keeping for lunch next day. The naval officers were highly delighted and roared with laughter.

Next day we still had people staying in the house and after dinner we heard the front door open, a scuffle outside in the hall, and a loud and mysterious "Quack, quack, quack!" Then our door opened and in waddled a duck! Round its neck was a large Air Force label with "I am the Resurrection"

written on it, and tied with an Air Force tie. We were all of us delighted and christened it "Egbert" and kept it for a pet. I found out that a great friend of ours, "Doggie" White, an Australian Pilot Officer, had been responsible for Egbert. He had been at the dance the night before and had heard Ethel's indignation at the disappearance of the pair of cold duck she had wanted to keep for lunch next day . . . "Them dailies . . ." she had said with withering scorn . . .

When Tes did eventually come to stay he said : "Poor Egbert, he must be lonely ; you should get him a mate." So we took the car and searched Margate and bought him a companion, whom we called Ethelfleda. The next thing was that they must have a pond. Tes helped to cement it and was a little worried that he had got it the wrong shape. But wrong shape or not, Ethelfleda was so delighted with her pond that she laid her eggs at the bottom of it every day ; Leo then distinguished himself by diving in and bringing them out. Egbert and Ethelfleda became two of the most popular and well-known members of our family and everyone used to ask after them most affectionately.

But this visit of Tes's was still in the future. Now he was writing and saying he couldn't come for the short visit he had hoped to fit in after Christmas, as he would have to spend his three days' leave in going to London on business.

Your signal came yesterday, while I was puzzling over what to do : and still I don't know.

When the G/C rang up W/C Burling it had an effect : those who do not go away for Christmas can now have 3 days in the ten following it. I put in at once for the Thursday, Friday and Saturday after Christmas—about the 29th Dec. I have to be back by midnight on Saturday. I have to license my bicycle and myself for the coming year. If it is fine I can get to London by noon on Thursday. Licensing takes time (County Hall, near Westminster Bridge), and then there is my insurance Company in the City. Probably one of those will carry on over the Friday morning. On Saturday afternoon I must ride back to Plymouth. So that the most time I can hope for, free, in London, is about 24 hours.

I *could*, of course, come down to Manston on Friday afternoon, stay that night and go off again early on Saturday morning ; but such a snap visit would be very unsatisfactory for all of us. It would all go in a flash.

It isn't much good ringing up W/C Burling, for in his gentle way he doesn't like it, and I don't want to ask for special privileges that might be refused, or only grudgingly given. In fact, I won't do it.

Christmas in any case is out of the question. I said long ago that I'd do duty those 3 days, and have my free time after it. The miscalculation I

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

made was in expecting 5 days, and getting only the 3. And I must spend a part of that in London, on business. It will be my last leave there till the first of April gives me more leave.

W/C Burling sails for Singapore on Jan. 3. He has been a very quiet and uninterfering C.O. and we are all very sorry he is going . . . Mount Batten is not very cheerful at the moment. It is to be up-graded on April 1st and so there's yet another change in prospect. All very unsettling.

The *Biscuit* is still motionless in her shed. I think she is ready for the water, but I feel not inclined for the work of running her.

Cold, rough, wet weather. This is not a cheerful letter, is it?

T. E. S.

### XXX

NINETEEN THIRTY-THREE opened tragically with another Iris flying-boat crash at Mount Batten. Tes was on the spot and went out in one of the new power-boats to assist with the rescue. He found that its increased speed amply justified his belief in the need for a new type of boat. An extra few moments in reaching a wreck might just mean saving a precious life or not, and the old boats used by the R.A.F. were, as he says in the following letter, "400 per cent" slower than the new ones. In this case, as a matter of fact, it seemed to have made no actual difference in the saving of life, but that didn't mean that the same would apply always. Tes began to turn his energies to trying to get salvage apparatus and methods improved. He had put forward suggestions about this already. One man lost his life in this crash.

MOUNT BATTEN : 16.I.33.

I was asking about the weather prospects, and wondering if I should wire and suggest the past week-end when Iris crashed—and we have been working since. The last of her wreck was pulled into the hangar yesterday. Now there is the Court

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

of Inquiry and then the Inquest. I seem to specialize in Iris crashes.

The power-boat did well. From our breakwater she reached the crash ( $\frac{7}{8}$ ths of a mile) in 1 m. 58 secs. This is a 400 per cent improvement on the 238 crash, when 700 yards took 4 minutes. As usual, having arrived, there was nothing to be done. I am putting in another moan upon salvage equipment.

Now the coming week-end is impossible, there being a board (T.T.)<sup>1</sup> at Calshot, and half the Marine Section at it. The week-end after next, the last of the month is my next chance. Let me know by the Wednesday before if it is convenient, please. Rough arrangements with the G.C.<sup>2</sup> were for me to reach Worthydown under my own steam, and then be picked up by a Moth. I think 2 p.m. should be our time of leaving Worthydown. It will take me quite a while (170 miles) to get there—starting at 9. I should do it by 1.15.

I'll try and get news of the quarantine. I have never heard of a loophole to avoid it: but I believe you have a choice of vets with whom to leave the dog.

Very busy,  
T. E. S.

MOUNT BATTEN; *Wed, 25 Jan. 33.*

I sent you a wire last night, saying the week-end after this. We are still short-handed in the Marine

<sup>1</sup> Technical training.

<sup>2</sup> Group-Captain.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

Section and I have been doing extra duty to make up for the days I will be away. The boats are running perfectly (not the *Biscuit* : the weather is colder than charity) and did very excellently in S/L Jones' crash last Thursday week.

Now about getting away. I can reach Worthydown by 1 p.m., even on a wet day. It is about 160 miles from here. There I shall hope for a Moth : if it cannot get through, for weather or other reason, then please send a signal there, or phone message.

S/Ldr. Jones commands here temporarily. Can the G/C write to him, and ask for me to have an extra-long pass ? Normally I can only get off after duty Saturday (12 noon). I'd like to get off at reveille on Friday, so as to reach you on Friday evening. Return on Sunday morning to Worthydown, and ride off from there about 1 p.m. for here.

It is a pity it is so formidably far. That is about the best possible. It gives me two clear nights at Manston anyhow.

I can't find any confirmation of your dog-quarantine modification.

Nothing here, but ghosts everywhere. And so cold.

T. E. S.

MOUNT BATTEN : *Saturday.*

Good : I shall be at Worthydown on Friday next, ready collection. Please make the hour

2 p.m., because then the pilot will have a quiet lunch. The Thursday-to-London isn't, I think, possible. W/Cmdr. Andrews is now C.O. He shapes pretty well, too.

I wrote to P. S.<sup>1</sup> telling him that I had sadly decided to get out. The feeling is like the sparrow fledgeling's, as it goes forth.

What a pen, what a pen! Nothing of concern here. Regards.

S.

This time the gods were kind. He got his short leave, duly turned up at Worthydown "for collection" in Sydney's Moth and came to stay with us at Manston. We talked a good deal about Singapore and the approaching end of his service with the R.A.F. Several times he said to Sydney: "I'll come to Singapore if you like . . ."

"I wish you would," said Sydney.

"But my service is coming to an end so soon; I'm afraid it's too short a time for them to post me overseas."

"Well, you might try to get them to do it."

"I'm afraid there's no chance of their agreeing; there is a price on my head, you know, in most countries."

Tes said this with his old mischievous look and the familiar gesture of rumpling his crest of hair. He evidently had such a fatalistic feeling about nothing being able to alter the terms of his R.A.F.

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Philip Sassoon.

service that I knew he wouldn't even try, or at least, if he did, it would be half-heartedly and without conviction ; if he knew a thing to be right he'd do it, but not otherwise. And somehow Sydney and I knew in our hearts that although we wanted him to come so much it wouldn't happen. The partnership had been dissolved and our efforts to patch it together again were only feeble attempts to hide the full realization of the fact. We wouldn't admit it ; but we all three knew it. Tes unconsciously clung to the men who had been at Mount Batten when we were there and didn't make friends so easily with the new-comers. Again, at Manston, he sought out his old Mount Batten companions and spent a long time talking to them of the things they had shared and done together. It was a proof of home-sickness. At last the day came for Tes to return to Plymouth. The Moth flew him to Worthydown, where he made his own way back to Mount Batten. But he was loath to go . . .

## MOUNT BATTEN : 8.2.33.

A good flip : the air was very soft and smooth, some hazy moisture about us : earth heavy-coloured. Just 90 minutes to Worthydown. I wished I had been going further. A very good Moth.

The West Country was true to type, afterwards, by raining hard from the border of Devonshire to Plymouth. There were two thick banks of fog,

meaning low gear. So all was well. That succession of dry days was feeling unnatural.

Batten as usual. Ark Royal in the Sound, and plenty to do. How long, I wonder?

Well, if you can fix up that March 11 meeting, I'll wait for it.

I pressed the *Biscuit's* button yesterday. She refused to fire! So there's something to clean or clear.

T. E. S.

His work on power-boats was apparently practically over and he was beginning to feel very restless and frustrated, as all he had to go back to now was routine station work. Since Sydney, hardly anyone seemed to know how to make use of Tes: he was a phenomenon—something inexplicable and too big for the average person to know how to cope with. Deliberately ignoring his presence was one way of doing it, and perhaps made the easiest service solution. In rank he was only an aircraftman, so why shouldn't he merely do ordinary aircraftman's work? Without wanting privileges or money, Tes did need scope for his brain power and constructive intelligence, and he was too old to go back happily to doing nothing but the routine jobs of his juniors after the valuable and important work Sydney had put him on to and encouraged him to do. I felt he was going to resign, and a letter written soon afterwards confirmed my suspicion.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

MOUNT BATTEN : 7.III.33.

I owe you two letters, I see. However, if that was all I owed !

*The Charles Men* : <sup>1</sup> . . . How quaint of you to want that. It is a Swedish prose-poem, translated into English & published in America some years ago ! I had a copy in my library, but cannot now find it. A very unusual book, quite beautiful.

The *Biscuit* had a short run last week. Some defects showed, so she is under repair again.

I hope that G. S.<sup>2</sup> week-end happens : I have had to throw my hand in, here, and am to go out on April 6. You will know how sorry that makes me.

Civies ? My suit is in London, so unless I come by train it can't be done. Don't worry. The time is short.

Yours,

T. E. S.

MOUNT BATTEN : *Wed*, 29.III.33.

This is a scribble before work begins, your letter having just arrived. I'm going to write you in five minutes suggesting that we put it off till after I leave the R.A.F. There will be only too much time then ! And I shall probably be suggesting myself

<sup>1</sup> By Verner von Heidenstam, a saga of Charles XII, the warrior King of Sweden, republished in England by Mr. Jonathan Cape, in 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Air Marshal Sir Geoffrey Salmond (1878-1933).

to first one and then another house, for week-ends, out of boredom.

. . . is a noisy cheerful lad, but not influential : and I'd rather not bring him in. As for Philip Sassoon, give him my very best messages, if you see him ; and say that I'm looking forward to meeting him soon. But I am not going to bother him over my private affairs.<sup>1</sup> You see, I have less than two years to do, at the best ; and Batten won't do ; and it isn't worth while trying to start in a new station at the eleventh hour. So out, out . . . I saw G. S.<sup>2</sup> one night, the week before last, and explained to him how I stood ; saying that if there was any special work (boats or otherwise) for which the C.A.S.<sup>3</sup> wanted me particularly—then I was at disposal : but I was not prepared to remain longer at station duties.

Since then W/Cmdr. Andrews has heard from Ellington<sup>4</sup> and I'm to leave on the 6th of April. So I shall not be here when you come. The *Biscuit* will be, and she is yours ; you know how to work the poor boat ! I had her down yesterday & the day before, and she was running fairly : only 2000 revs, instead of 2300 (some trifle of timing or carburettor which I have not time to trace, now)

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact he had written to Sir Philip on the subject on March 21st, and did so again on the 30th.

<sup>2</sup> The late Sir Geoffrey Salmond.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. his brother Sir John Salmond, who was Chief of the Air Staff till April, 1933.

<sup>4</sup> Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Edward Ellington, G.C.B.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

but fast over the water, and a great joy. I leave her here, and shall try to find a service owner for her. The poor little boat. I hate losing her.

I'm sorry : the trumpet has just gone. Do use the boat, if you are here. I should like the notion of that.

Yours,  
T. E. S.

MOUNT BATTEN : 3.IV.33.

Here is Monday come, and my discharge due on Thursday, and not an indication from Air Ministry if I am to or not.

Extraordinary people.

I am carrying on as if to do, and have got rid of all my kit, except what I stand in. This last Saturday I ran a car-load of books, records, clothes and tools to my cottage, which is still in the throes of the builders, but looking peaceful despite it. I think it will do, as a harbour.

Gramophone already there, and the acoustics of the room wonderful. Strings are really "woody" and ripe, in the cottage. All my records are there assembled, yards of them. But only a few books, as yet. The rest in London await the shelving's completion.

If my discharge comes I move to the cottage on Thursday, and to London on Friday. To Nottingham, Saturday and Sunday. So no Salcombe for me, I'm afraid.

- If the discharge does not come through I will send

five telegrams of cancellation and remain at Batten, very happy to see you and help you to biscuit!

To-night I am for London, to see Philip Sassoon by his arrangement. Return to-morrow night. How we gad about! Saw Lady Astor last night. She was asking after you. Ah, dear, I shall be glad when I know what is to be!

Yours,  
T. E. S.

Should I not be at Batten when you come, F/sqd. Sommers is your best help. I will give him word about petrol, oil, and crane—The G/C can tell W/C Andrews that it's all regular! The *Biscuit* is going beautifully.

Tes was still at Mount Batten when I went to Salcombe, as the Air Ministry decided to postpone his retirement until he had had a talk with the Chief of Air Staff, Sir John Salmond. He came over to see me and took me out in the *Biscuit*.

We chose our favourite quarry to go to. It was spring weather; the air very clear and bright and sharp. Blue water sparkled and danced round our bows and the *Biscuit* seemed pathetically glad to be taking us out again. Perhaps that was only sentimental imagining, but it seemed so all the same because she went beautifully and had given Tes endless trouble before.

We didn't talk much. Tes was depressed about

his future, or rather, lack of future. And I knew that Singapore loomed in front of me and meant a far more merciless separation than Manston. Devonshire had put on one of its loveliest dresses for us. The trees were budding with young green ; here and there a tree of pussy-willow or hazel catkins made soft yellow patches in the bushes ; and primroses and shiny celandines opened their petals wide and basked in the April sun. It was too early for foxgloves, but we could imagine them rearing their tapering heads over the quarry's banks and cliffs. The place had ghosts everywhere, as Tes said in one of his letters.

He was relaxed and quiet, but not as serene and childishly happy as in the old days. He looked a little worn and used up.

Later he wrote to Lady Astor : " There's something broken in the works ; invention comes hard."

PLYMOUTH : 24.IV.33.

Yes, those two quarry excursions were good and unexpected.

Since then I have seen Sir John Salmond, who told me that the doctors hold just a hope that their radium treatment may save his brother.<sup>1</sup>

His conclusion, after a long talk, was that perhaps I ought to be posted to Felixstowe, and be at call of E.6., in the Air Ministry, whenever they wanted me. I am waiting now for him to give

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Geoffrey Salmond (Air Marshal).

effect to this decision, and shall leave the *Biscuit* here behind me, meanwhile.

There is no truth, I think, in that Hollywood story—or, at least, if they are making a film of the *Seven Pillars*, they have not sent me any word. Anybody has a right to make such a film, and no consent from me is necessary: for it is a legal maxim that there is no property in events. If a thing is true, it cannot be copyright.

I spent a few days in my cottage lately, and liked it. The quietness of it, and the having nothing that I must do, were like the quiet patches in a storm. However, Sir John's decision puts the cottage out of count for some time!

Yours,

T. E. S.

At the end of April the Air Ministry's decision was effected. He was to go to the R.A.F. Marine Experimental Station at Felixstowe and be attached to the boat-builder's yards. To avoid publicity he was to wear plain clothes! After Felixstowe he would probably have to go to White's yards at Cowes and later, when he had finished there, back to Scott Paine's yards at Hythe. In the end, another place was to be added to the list; this was Bridlington, in Yorkshire, where he finally ended his service in the Royal Air Force.

## XXXI

TES started his new phase of power-boat work at once and had to dash about England ; consequently, we didn't see him at all in May, and had to wait till nearly the end of the month to hear from him. At last he wrote to me from Cowes :

119, CLARENCE ROAD,  
EAST COWES,  
ISLE OF WIGHT.

21.V.33.

Throughout May I have been moving—Felixstowe, London (three times), Manchester, Nottingham, Hythe, Cowes—and so no news has kept up with me. Hence this is merely a line to report the new address.

In the paper to-day I saw a short note of a bad crash at Manston—Hutchings and your Moth, I am afraid. That is bad, very bad.

Met Lord to-day. He seemed a little shaky : but the firm has sold the R.A.F. some Clouds, so they should be more hopeful.

My job here is to watch the building of five

pinnaces for the R.A.F. in White's yard : not thrilling ships, but solid and costly.

The engines are being done at Manchester, and they may take me off up there again any day. But if you or Sydney are likely to be in Southampton Water any time, do send a line and remember Carlow ! The *Biscuit* is at Batten, of course, poor thing.

T. E. S.

It was not our Moth that crashed, but a Service machine. Flight-Lieutenant Hutchings, the pilot who was killed, was a great friend of ours, and only during his last visit Tes and he had had a long talk on flying. Anyone who was enthusiastic about his job appealed to Tes, and he respected the keen pilot in " Hutch " as much as he liked him personally.

His reference to " Lord " and the " Clouds " he had sold to the R.A.F. was to a member of the Saunders Roe firm who made Cloud and Cutty Sark flying-boats. And his mysterious mention of Lord Carlow was in connexion with his converted motor-launch. Tes kept a look-out for the boat while he was on the Isle of Wight, but it never came. A strong breeze, sharp for May, whipped up the water and it remained far too rough for us to do anything but poke our noses out of Ramsgate Harbour and then retire hastily.

Would Whitsun be possible ? I wrote and asked . . .

THE GOLDEN REIGN

119, CLARENCE ROAD,

EAST COWES,

ISLE OF WIGHT.

30.V.33.

I'm sorry, but Whitsun was booked a while ago. I am to meet Bruce Rogers, my American printer, & do proofs with him ; for a new edition of the *Odyssey* translation. He had just come across from the States & is awaiting me in London.

This job (of boat-building) needed doing. At Cowes I am helpless, all the contracts having been long placed—but never again, while I am involved. The waste of money, the stupidity, the ineffectiveness . . . I get angry in thinking of it. The Air Force must do better, if it is to justify itself.

I hope the Carlow boat goes well and that the weather helps. Think of me, working hard in Cliffords Inn, in a room so dark that the lights burn all day. I have so much liked this past fortnight in the island, and ridden all over it peacefully, no crowds having yet arrived. One M.L. came into the roads and I wondered if it was Carlow's—but it went at once, before I could ask.

Last week I met the Old Lord and Eric Lord, Saunders Roe are a little better off, in the aircraft department, through selling Clouds and Cuttys. Their boatyard is nearly dead : only they have just built a little £900 cruiser that is good value. Desperate times for ship-builders.

The first of these pinnaces launches about June

12, and after its trials I want to give myself a holiday. I shall write again then-about.

Commend me to all bipedal and quadrupedal Smiths !

T. E. S.

So Whitsun had to be missed. I was depressed and in my depression I wrote about other coming sorrows. Leaving the dogs would be a great wrench. I couldn't take them to Singapore and condemn them to go through the long period of quarantine on their return to England, so I must arrange for them to stay behind. I would not leave Squeak as well—that would be too much, and Squeak would enjoy her first visit to the East. It would be my first visit, too, but somehow I was not looking forward to it much.

Tes's letter held out a new hope : his work at Cowes was almost finished ; then he would get leave and be able to come and stay with us for a time . . .

I. OF W. : 16.VI.33.

Yes, you will miss the poor beasts, and they will miss you. That includes Squeak, if you leave her behind. Poor Leo will miss the R.A.F., too. Civil life is not all it is made out to be.

Tell me, when do you really expect to take wing ? Do you go by trooper ? God forbid, but I suppose you must, and it will not be the experience I had. I do not think I can ever quite forgive the Government its troop-ships.

Talking of ships, the *Varis*, Colin Cooper aboard, came here yesterday. So beautifully appointed a little yacht, with quite astonishing cabins and saloons, and a really good engine room. Capt. Chamberlain aboard, as Skipper, too.

We talked of the *Biscuit*, and he suggested that the yacht could fetch her up from Batten to Scott Paine's yard at Hythe. I jumped at the idea, for Batten are making difficulties about storing her, and at Hythe I could work on her, and make her all new again. It cannot be for just a while, as the yacht goes back to Thornycroft for finishing—but in the summer. That is very good. Perhaps there will be a *Biscuit* when you return and S. S. is C.S.O.<sup>1</sup> at Coastal Area.

Does it not sadden you to think that Singapore is his last station? Thereafter he will be too great for one place to hold.

Coming to Manston—as soon as I finish here and move to England: and on Monday the first of these pinnaces should launch. Patience. It nears . . .

T. E. S.

Tell P. Balfour that while the R.A.F. want me, I am happy.

Before he left Cowes he sent us a copy of Bruce Rogers's private printing of his letters<sup>2</sup> to him,

<sup>1</sup> Chief Staff Officer.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters from T. E. Shaw to Bruce Rogers*. Bruce Rogers, 1933; 200 copies privately printed at the Press of William Edwin Rudge from type set by Bertha M. Goudy.

written in 1927 to 1931 while he was translating the *Odyssey*. This thin book in its dark brown linen suit, beautifully and finely printed, stands next to the shining black leather *Odyssey* in which I have slipped the torn pieces of paper with his first rough draft of phrases or paragraphs written on them, retrieved from the waste-paper basket—and completes the work. In the accompanying letter he throws the blame good-humouredly on Sydney and me and the *Biscuit* for his having been so long in finishing the translation. To offset this accusation (to which I am only too delighted to plead guilty!) I will quote the last sentence of Mr. Rogers's introduction to the volume of letters . . .

“In justice it must be added that the impression given by several of the letters, of the translator's being frequently in arrears with his ‘copy,’ is but the result of his sensitiveness and conscientiousness.”

119, CLARENCE ROAD,  
EAST COWES,  
ISLE OF WIGHT.

29.VI.33.

This is a private printing of letters I wrote to Bruce Rogers, my famous printer, while the *Odyssey* was under way. You should shelve it with the *Odyssey*, and when sold together the value will go up. The letters are worthless alone; and not worth reading even. You will find in them if you search, evidence that I had not at Batten all the

THE GOLDEN REIGN

desirable spare time for the literary work which I had contracted to do. I wonder how that was? Ask S. W. S. and the *Biscuit*!

Did I tell you that Colin may retrieve the *Biscuit* from Plymouth and bring her to Hythe when next his yacht goes westward? Good business.

I seem to visit London often, these days. Do you ever get so far? Is the shadow of Singapore looming over you?

All quiet and well on my front.

T. E. S.

13, BIRMINGHAM STREET,<sup>1</sup>  
SOUTHAMPTON.

*Tuesday, 1.VIII.33.*

Ha now, this is urgent. I am to visit Lympne on Friday next, for lunch (and when I lunches, as you will remember from Batten, I usually stays the night) and on Sunday I am back in Wiltshire: but Thursday night:—where are you and the G/C on Thursday night? If it is Manston may I arrive to lunch on Thursday? Full house perhaps . . .? Then shake me down with Egbert and Ethelfleda, or reserve a Macdonald in a hut. It really is a chance, perhaps my last. I am so nailed into Southampton Water by these jobs: up & down all day and all week: that's me.

<sup>1</sup> The façade now bears a plaque with the following inscription: "In this house lived T. E. Shaw, Lawrence of Arabia; July 1933–November 1934." There Lawrence rented a back bedroom. The plaque was placed on the house in September, 1935.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

And congratulate Squeak—beg her pardon—Miss Smith. Facing me on Cowes Pier, each time I embark, is a poster illustrating Ramsgate. Squeak is the illustrious one, in a green bathing costume, looking a little chilled about the elbows which are firmly driven into her . . . ribs, I think it is. There or thereabouts.

Congratulate her : and it is *exactly* the spot of colour needed for the end wall of the big room by the dining-room door. Too late, alas, too late. Singapore & the shadow of a palm tree there. Alas, poor Leo.

Here is a form : please wire yes or not-so-good. 13, Birmingham Street is me, for a while yet.

Yours,

T. E. S.

The “ Macdonald ” he asks me to reserve for him in a hut is an ordinary airman’s bed. The mattress of this bed comprises the two “ biscuits,” one of which the dogs had thought was specially put down for their benefit in Tes’s office over the Workshops at Mount Batten.

The telegraph form he enclosed, on which—naturally—I wrote, “ Yes ! ” no doubt came to him in a letter from one of his unknown “ fans.” Always they hoped for a reply ; always they tried to squeeze one out of him by hook or by crook ; always they were disappointed. If they enclosed a prepaid telegraph form he immediately saved it up to use for his friends.

13 Birmingham St  
Southampton.

Tuesday 1. VIII. 33

Ha now, this is urgent. I am to visit  
Lynne on Friday week, for lunch (and where I  
lunches, as you will remember from Batten, I  
usually stays the night) and on Sunday I am  
back in Wiltshire: but Thursday night:— where  
are you and the G/C. on Thursday night? If  
it is Manchester may I arrive to lunch on Thursday?  
Full house perhaps ....? Then shake me down with  
Egbert & Eitel fieda, or reserve a Macdonald in  
a hut. It really is a chance, perhaps my last. I  
am so nailed into Southampton Water by these jobs: up  
& down all day and all week: that's me.

And congratulate Squeak — by her pardon — Miss  
Smith. Facing me on Cowes Pier, each time I embark,  
is a poster illustrating Ramsgate. Squeak is the  
illustration one, in a green bathing costume, looking a  
little chilled about the elbows which are firmly driven  
into her .... ribs, I think it is. There or thereabouts.

Congratulate her: and it is exactly the spot of colour  
needed for the end wall of the big room by the dining room  
door. Too late, alas too late. Singapore, & the  
shadow of a palm-tree there. Alas poor Leo.

Here is a form: please wire yes or not — as good.  
13 Birmingham Street is me, for a while yet

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

“ If people will be so silly,” he said, “ as to write to someone they know nothing about, and who doesn’t know them from Adam—well . . . that’s their own look out.”

13, BIRMINGHAM STREET,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

Movements.

19.VIII.33.

- Aug. 13-17—Bridlington
- Aug. 18 —road to Southampton
- Aug. 19 —Hythe
- Aug. 20 —Fareham
- Aug. 21 —Cowes—preliminary trials of pin-  
nace
- Aug. 22 —Air Ministry
- Aug. 23 —Cowes (acceptance trials)

Have now written to P. S. <sup>1</sup> (who also wrote and wired while I was in Yorkshire) to say that you suggest me for Manston on Monday, Aug. 28. So would Sat.—Sund. (26 & 27) suit him, or Tuesday 29?

When he replies I will telegraph you and suggest that I be picked up at G/C Barton’s <sup>2</sup> aerodrome at Hamble either on Sat. morning, Aug. 26, and flown to Lympne : or on Monday Aug. 28, and flown to Manston. Later movements to be settled as need arises. I shall have to get back to Hamble somehow by Wed., 30 Aug.

Alas : for me to move so far for so long requires

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Philip Sassoon.

<sup>2</sup> Group-Captain Robert Barton, Air Services Training School, Hamble.

13 Bournemouth 54.  
Southampton  
19. VIII. 33

Moments

- Aug 13 - 17 Bridlington  
Aug 18 - road to Southampton  
19 . 14<sup>th</sup>  
20 . Farnham  
21 . Comes - preliminary trials of pinnace  
22 . Air Ministry  
23 . Comes (acceptance trials)

Have now written to P.S. (who also wrote & wired what I was in Yorkshire) to say that you suggest me for Manston on Monday Aug 28. so would Sat - Sund (26 + 27) suit him, or Tuesday 29?

When he replies I will telegraph you and suggest that I be picked up at S/C. Barton's aerodrome at Hamble either on Sat. morning, Aug 26, and flown to Lympne: or on Monday Aug 28 and flown to Manston. Later moments to be settled as need arises. I shall have to get back to Hamble somehow by Wed. 30 Aug.

Alas: for me to move so far for so long requires a train like H.R.H. to the Sullies. One wet day will wash the whole programme.

After I leave the R.A.F. I shall be free, and refuse even to go anywhere to programme. I shall blow with the wind, sleep like a poppy and eat like a cormorant. After I leave the R.A.F. .... And never a letter! Not one ..... Heaven.

a time-table like H.R.H. to the Scillies. One wet day will crash the whole programme. After I leave the R.A.F. I shall be firm, and refuse ever to go anywhere to programme. I shall blow with the wind, sleep like a poppy and eat like a cormorant. After I leave the R.A.F. . . . and never a letter! Not one . . . Heaven.

T. E. S.

His reference to the Prince of Wales and the Scilly Isles needs explanation. The May before, H.R.H. had expressed a wish to fly over while he was visiting his Duchy of Cornwall. Sydney had had the organization to see to, and Tes helped him to draft a time-table. Elaborate and complicated arrangements were made for his reception on the islands, but in the end the weather was stormy and a heavy swell made it too risky for a flying-boat to land on the water. Consequently, the air trip was cancelled at the last moment, which was a great disappointment, not only to the people of the Scilly Isles, but also to us at Mount Batten, where he was expected to arrive in order to board the flying-boat. Later, we received a visit from H.R.H. Prince George, now Duke of Kent—who was flown by flying-boat from Torquay on a visit to the Duchy of Cornwall. I was in London, and Tes rang me up to tell me that a "picnic" lunch basket had to be prepared for them to take, as H.R.H. was to be given lunch on board. I hurriedly took the night train home, arrived at Plymouth at 7 a.m. ;

THE GOLDEN REIGN

Tes met me in our car, and we discussed the all-important "meal" to be prepared. He felt that his favourite "potted sunshine" should be added, but it was rather a tall order to pack enough iced oranges for so many people, so I fear I said "No!" However, Sydney told me afterwards that everyone was delighted with the contents of the basket, and it had all been a great success.

13, BIRMINGHAM STREET,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

23.VIII.33.

Haste and pencil.

P. S. <sup>1</sup> suggests 26 or 27 for Lympne: so can a Moth collect me at any hour convenient to itself from Hamble, Flowerdown, Worthydown, or other such aerodrome? And deliver me to Lympne, before or after lunch? definitely before or after, I mean; not during.

Then can a collection be made on Monday morning of my body, for carriage to Manston, b. or a.i.? definitely b. or a., I mean, not d.? Return S'ton. Tues.

It all reminds me of the P. of W. How alphabetical we grow!

A most unfortunate week. Engines on test daily & all day at Hythe. I have to leave poor F/Lt. Norrington alone to cope with them all. We had arranged double shifts so carefully—for it is his holiday, with family, complete!

T. E. S.

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Philip Sassoon.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

That was August, our last in England, our last at Manston and the last August I was destined to share with Tes. It was only a flying visit that he made, literally as well as metaphorically, and over it all hung a shadow of finality. Sydney's orders for Singapore had come and he was to sail in October : we must begin to pack once more. I decided not to go out with him at once, but to follow with Squeak in December when he had had time to find us a house and could advise us what to bring with us. In the meantime, I took a little furnished house in London. It was in Canning Place, South Kensington, and quite near the Park. I wrote and asked Tes to come in and see us whenever he was in London . . .

13, BIRMINGHAM STREET,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

26.IX.33.

Indeed indeed I should have written earlier, if unable to call : and I am utterly unable to call. My last visit to London was on business and it lasted just four hours. Not even a night in a friendly place. But then, my pocket is empty—and London is no use for careful non-spenders.

The evacuation of Manston must have been hard work : and in a few months will come the evacuation of England. Things, things, things—what fools we are to let them hang on to our affections. I lost a lot of books lately—and felt sorry instead of

glad. Measure by that how short of Gandhi I fall in wisdom.

Please remember me to Sydney. I hope he is leaving England in good trim and according to schedule and inventory. The work at Singapore should be wide enough to occupy him wholly. Find an interest for yourself, do. I do not think you can fence out there: and there will be no boats. However, life is wide.

Mr. Breakey is at Calshot, doing the course. I saw him for five minutes. He expects Mrs. Breakey, and then I am to tea with them. Singapore has not made him old or dry or nervous, overmuch. I do hope you come back thence well, both of you.

A new control job hobbles me to the Power Yard. If it ever finishes, I will be able to get a night in London. Warning later!

T. E. S.

The rug decorates my cottage. I am very glad of the inspiration that made us snaffle it suddenly. They are good rugs.

## XXXII

THAT autumn of 1933 was autumn indeed for me. Packing up our home at Pouces Farm, abandoning the slightly ridiculous but all the more lovable Egbert and Ethelfleda, leaving the pond Tes had cemented into "the wrong shape," and the Walls ice-cream man whose bell had sent the dogs flying in ecstatic anticipation and with ears flapping to the gate . . . leaving the gracious long Adams room which Tes's pictures had adorned so pleasantly, leaving, above all, the possibility of perhaps seeing him next week . . . or next month . . . going one step farther away from still more dear Mount Batten and the homely "Fisherman's Arms"; from the *Biscuit* and the quarry with the foxgloves . . .

When my thoughts led me to Mount Batten, I had to switch them off sternly—my heart was too heavy. Sydney had gone; that was a wrench, but I should join him in three months' time, while Tes—when should I see Tes again once the East had claimed me?

As he had said in one of his letters to me written after we left Mount Batten: "Roots grow in the dark all unknowing." I was surprised to find that my roots had grown even into the soil of Manston

and Pouces Farm, where at first I had been so miserable. Tes had helped these roots to grow. Generously and unselfishly he had interested himself in our doings there and in the alterations Sydney made in the station.

His intermittent comings and goings kept something of our perfect three-sided friendship and close companionship alive. Now it was finally and irrevocably torn to pieces. It is significant that not one of the three of us had any thought of joining up together anywhere after Singapore. This was the final break and our subconscious selves knew it.

Sydney wrote to Tes on the boat and wished he were with him, but he had the same feeling as I, and as Tes, that this could never be and that the Fates had decreed the future could hold no further working together, for a while. It is three years now since I first began this story, and it has, indeed, been a continuation of our working together and a cementing of the partnership which seemed to have been dissolved but which can never really be broken.

Squeak and I moved to Canning Place, but Tes paid only the briefest of flying visits to Town and couldn't come and see us :

13, BIRMINGHAM STREET,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

12.XI.33.

Twice lately I have paid fugitive visits to London : but this week I am to be there for two or three nights. So I have great hopes of our meeting.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

The G/C sent me an admirable letter from his ship, regretting I was not with him—not on the ship, I mean, but at Singapore on the strength. I regret it, too. State-papers were once one of my strengths, and we could have written some bright ones together.

What a pen. All fits and stops. That was a stop. This is, too.

However, London this week, I hope. My name & address are

353<sup>172</sup> A/C Smith, H.E.,  
Union Jack Club,  
Waterloo Road, S.E.1.

Telephone 403 Air Ministry. Room 366 c/o  
F/Lts. Beauforte - Greenwood and Norrington.  
Name of SHAW, there.

T. E. S.

13, BIRMINGHAM STREET,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

23.XI.33.

Yes, indeed. All my programmes fail : all my expectations are falsified. Instead of staying several nights in London, I spent only four hours : up at 2 p.m. : down at 6 p.m.

My next visit will be "one day" next week, to see the Motor Cycle Show at Olympia. It will be a day visit only. Next night visit—about December 8. I want to see you. Will you send me one more

line, to say where Canning Place is, for a traveller by bus or tube : no bike and no taxis.

I spent an irregular last week. Air Ministry Thursday. Southampton Thurs. night. Oxford Friday. Clouds Hill Saturday. Hythe (via Salisbury) Sunday. That meant nearly 400 miles riding !

Your letters waited here. Also a wire from Carlow, wanting to see me. If you see him, will you explain that I am not a ready writer ?

Yours,

T. E. S.

He came in to see us after the Motor Cycle Show and stayed for an hour or so. I asked him about the show. "It was all right, but the noise . . . you know, noise seems to me horrible—yet I am a man the same as they and they don't seem to mind it."

He looked older . . . tired . . . worn. The air of nervous strain he had lost so completely in the Golden Reign hung about him. His impending discharge and what he would do with his leisure weighed on his mind. We had little to say ; he disliked an emotional atmosphere and so I strove to hide what I felt. And, after all, this wasn't the last time. He would come to Southampton to see us before we went on board . . .

I drove him to Addison Road Tube Station and he got out of the car and stood watching me for a few moments before he disappeared into the station.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

He was standing in the shadow of immense Olympia, and as I turned and looked at him, he had his hat in his hand, as on that first day I met him in 1921 in Cairo. In his eyes was a wistful far-away look and his figure appeared small and a shade dispirited. I never saw him again.

13, BIRMINGHAM STREET,  
SOUTHAMPTON.

1.XII.33.

As they stand, my promises are to leave Kings X by the 7.30 p.m. train on Friday night : that means leaving Southampton by bike about 4 p.m.

A cancellation is just possible, my old friend being not too well. If I am in Southampton over the Friday night, I shall visit your boat. If I do not arrive, then please understand that I have gone.

This week-end has been pledged for months : it is an annual affair : more of a tradition than a pleasure, but there you are !

Best of journeys and compensation, at the end of it, for going : this whether we meet next Friday or not : also my regards to S. W. S.

T. E. S.

Squeak and I and Lily, who was coming with us, spent the last night at the Euston Hotel. Next day we took the boat-train to Southampton, where Tes was to have met us to say good-bye. In the end he was prevented from coming. Perhaps it had made

the last afternoon easier to think that we should be meeting once again. Like Tes, I always preferred to "fade out"; the last few hours or even moments of a parting are a strain to everyone. It was one of the many things we had in common—the hatred of saying good-bye. We discussed this many times, and both emphatically declared never if we could prevent it would we say good-bye to anyone we really cared for—it was far better never to have a "last meeting."

### XXXIII

WE left England on the *Ranpura* on Friday, 4th December, 1933, and had an uneventful journey. The personnel of No. 100 Squadron, R.A.F., were on board. It was the first time a complete squadron had travelled by P. & O. and the ship's officers were delighted with the good fellowship the officers and all other ranks displayed. Lord and Lady Allenby were also on board, bound for North Africa. Tes had written to tell them that I would be among the passengers. They sought me out and we had long talks about Tes, whose admiration for Lord Allenby's breadth of vision, integrity and iron strength of character is expressed so strongly in *Seven Pillars*.

But, like Tes, I don't care for ship-board life ; it is too narrow and cramped and one can't get away from people. I was therefore glad when we arrived in Singapore and found Sydney's smiling face to greet me. Instead of the blazing colours and bright tropical sun that I had expected, my first sight of the beauties of Singapore was through driving rain and in the muggiest of heat. It was depressing to a degree.

At last we docked and Sydney drove us off to

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

Seletar Air Base ; I felt I was dreaming some strange and unaccountable dream. Suddenly, I caught sight of a notice on which was painted in large letters the magic sign : " To the Mental Home and Leper Colony " ! How Tes would relish that moment ! But I forgot—he was not there to enjoy the joke.

Our new life was so remote in every way from Tes, that it would be idle to describe it. His letters were very few, because he said he felt so far away. I am sure that he shared my deep conviction that we should never meet again—on this plane of consciousness at any rate.

CLOUDS HILL,  
MORETON,  
DORSET.

24 *May*, 1934.

Yes, it has been months since I wrote. It is always like that when people go across the world. There comes over me that sense of hopeless space and lack of contact. One changes in a week, you know, and unless in daily touch, how can either of us visualize the sort of mind which receives the letter, after weeks and weeks of posting ?

Your letters do not give a good feeling of Singapore. I am sorry for that. The airmen say it is the ideal foreign station, and wish they could spend all their overseas times there, always. I suppose the money factor does not oppress them, as it does the officers.

I don't know what can be done about that. For me (with my present unpopularity in Air Ministry) to attempt to reach the financial and treasury people would be to court failure. It is of course with the actual Treasury that any reform would lie: and Treasury is quite prepared to approve a local increase of allowances—if Air Ministry will put up the case. But in fact tho' Air Staff is keener on increasing strength and establishments—and on up-grading every possible appointment, so as to make two seniors grow where one grew before—thus improperly feeding its foreign servants. I'm sorry, but the present direction of the R.A.F. is N.B.G. It is worse to-day than at any time since Trenchard left.

Our *Aquarius* is proving herself almost a greyhound. Six weeks out, and almost at Singapore. You will laugh when you see the tiny ugly little thing—but her quality is excellent, and she will last for years and do all manner of work. If only she had been a few m.p.h. faster and a few feet longer and broader. It is the only instance I have yet seen of two quarts having been successfully inserted into a pint pot. Of course, with ships, you can arrange more top-hamper than with beer.

Here I go on building boats at the Power Yard. Scott Paine's new designs are very promising. His Sea Lion, in particular, looks like becoming a reliable engine, and if so we shall use it for the larger and faster boats which the Air Staff (rather against my judgment) are determined to have.

For the moment my job is overseeing five more of the target (armoured) boats that have been so successful at Bridlington during the last two seasons. One is to come to Singapore, and I have suggested sheathing it experimentally in Tungum, a new stainless brass that *might* be proof against the queer acids of your sea-water. We are told that no copper-sheathing is any good.

The Power 100 h.p. engine is now reliable, and is the stand-by of the R.A.F. marine section—England. The older Brooke and Thornycroft engines are extinct, here. I believe some still exist in foreign waters.

Books, you asked for, long ago in a letter. I haven't seen any for months. Life is lodgings, now, and I have stopped writing letters (or anything else) and reading. Afterwards, when this job of boat building is over, and I can get to my cottage and rest. I hope that the rush of the jobs is not upsetting me for eventual peacefulness, for in the cottage the whole 24 hours of the day will belong to me, and I have to fill it without finding it too long. I think it will be all right, but it is, in its way, as much a step in the dark as my original joining the R.A.F. I hate these abrupt measures : it is so much more gentle to slide easily and slowly into or out of jobs : but this time I fancy I shall be working full time on R.A.F. boats until March 11th and on March 18th I will be getting my clearance certificates and returning from Felixstowe to Dorset in plain clothes : and very sadly too. I

shall miss the Air Force, very sharply. You are so fortunate to be there for the whole of your useful life.

I shall try to meet Lord Londonderry again soon, and draw his gaze upon Singapore : and Philip hopes to fly out there soon and see it for himself. Not that Philip has great fighting value in the Cabinet or Air Ministry. They moved their S. of S.'s<sup>1</sup> into Gwydyr House, to isolate them ! Bullock<sup>2</sup> is doing well. I wish he was C.A.S.<sup>3</sup> ! and the Air Council as well !

T. E. S.

Sydney was worried about Tes and his work. He felt too far away to be able to help him effectively with advice or through the Service. Tes was finishing off his most important constructive power-boat work—a project on which Sydney had started him as long ago as Mount Batten. When that was finished there would be no further object in his staying on in the Air Force.

“ If I were at home, I'd make a big effort to get his time extended. I feel that now I've gone he's just drifting away from people and from everything. He's doing magnificent work where he is, but when that's done, he'll make no trouble to get anything else.”

“ What about writing to someone ? ”

“ Letters are no use ; you have to talk to Tes

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State.    <sup>2</sup> Sir Christopher Bullock, K.C.B.

<sup>3</sup> Chief of the Air Staff.

—it's his personality that's so convincing. I feel there is so much he could do . . . and yet no one will use him properly if he doesn't make them—and he won't trouble to make them ! ”

BRIDLINGTON : 15.XI.34.

A Christmas letter ! To write it from the sea front of Bridlington at 10 at night with rain and wind outside and the long low-ride waves rolling up the sand, feels somehow just right. How unlike your Singapore ! I am sent here by Air Ministry to supervise the overhaul of the ten R.A.F. boats that work the bombing range. A big, tricky job, which will probably keep me till I run out my time in February.

I haven't had to write for ever so long, because I met you both by deputy. There was Wood, one night in Southampton, on his trooper before he sailed. We talked for hours, and from what he said there grew up in my mind a half-picture (probably wildly wrong) of the shape and feel of Singapore. Your letters show that you don't find much in it. S. S. finds all and more than he can do. Well, the lucky him. If it wasn't for the work, I'd go daft over a whole winter in Bridlington. A job is an essentially masculine thing and very filling.

Another contact was Lady Louis Mountbatten. Philip Sassoon asked me to lunch, and sat her beside me. With the first came in the 5th Footman, carrying an enormous hat-box of smooth brown cardboard. “ Lady Mountbatten's hats,” he said.

We all giggled. She cried out that they weren't for her, but for you, and scrabbled deep in the roll of paper inside the box till she drew out six or seven little frail hats of felt or linen, all pastel colours. These she pressed on Philip. "Here you are," she said, "when you get to Singapore, all you have to do is to give them to Mrs. S. S.!" Philip staggered and shut his eyes. Seven hats, and he had only a feather-weight suitcase containing his six necessary suits. He positively couldn't. Lady Louis fitted the hats one into the other like a nest of Chinese boxes until they were really only one hat. "It's nothing," she said, and turned to Philip's man with instructions to throw out some unimportant part of the Under Secretary's kit, and insert the hats.

More food came in. Duveen and Mrs. Gubbay and the rest of us discussed you and your hats and S. S. Another footman entered with another load, of several flat boxes. "Lady M. B.'s bathing costumes," he said. We howled, all except Philip, and he looked as though he probably would howl, soon. "I suppose I'm to take these to Mrs. S. S.?" he asked ironically. "Of course," snapped Lady Louis. "You didn't think I wanted a bathing costume to lunch with you, did you? What nonsense!" Philip protested again about Imperial Airways restriction of baggage. She sent them up to his room with similar instructions, Philip vowing that he wouldn't present them to you till after the water-party

(obviously being prepared for his welcome) was over and done. Lady Louis said they were magnificent bathing costumes, and wanted to drag me into it.

I sent affectionate messages via Philip, but I don't suppose you got these either, till after the bathing party. I left with the impression that Lady Louis would take a deal of stopping.

Another contact was with Admiral and Lady (yes, he has been promoted since) Fullerton.<sup>1</sup> The Admiralty went on being mulish about Scott Paine's motor-boats, and I lost patience and thought it might be rather a rag to force one down their throats. Also it would buck the Navy up to have a modern boat set against their primitive junks. So I pulled string after string, and all the bells rang, till finally Scott Paine and I were asked down to Plymouth to explain these new boats. The Admiral put us up at Mount Wise for two nights, and behaved like the whitest sort of man. He really is a super-Admiral.

Scott Paine got a long way with him, and the Eyres-Monsell<sup>2</sup> blew in, in a yacht. We roped him into the talk (he is a sort of S. of S. for the Navy, and a war-time partner of mine) and that about clinched it. So Scott Paine got the order for a new Admiral's Barge for the C. in C. Devonport.

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Sir Eric A. J. Fullerton, K.C.B., D.S.O., was C.-in-C. Plymouth, October, 1932, to June, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> 1st Viscount Monsell, cr. 1935. First Lord of the Admiralty 1931-35.

## THE GOLDEN REIGN

We finished it in about three weeks, and down it went by sea, a great 45 foot thing, full of cabins and lavatories and chromium plate. The day after it got there happened to be the inspection day by the whole Board of Admiralty. Seven Sea Lords, and some Land Lords got into it at once, and Scott Paine nearly talked their heads off. The Admiral went on being as white as white, and Lady Fullerton remembered how Jacky Fisher fought for new ideas, and backed up.

It was very sad being at Plymouth and on the water there as the only survivor of our parties. I was glad to get away, fun though the boat-politics were.

Ah well, here endeth this paper : and in three months, endeth A/C Shaw. It is a lamentable and paralysing future, about which I think all day and cannot bear it.

Sydney got his promotion to Air Commodore after we had been in Singapore for some time. As such he is entitled to wear the "blue plumes" in his white full-dress helmet that Tes talks of in the following letter of congratulation :

BRIDLINGTON : 18.I.35.

Excellent : this letter is addressed to the Air Commodore. I wish I could see the blue plumes nodding down the main roads of Singapore.

The sands run out, continually. Another six weeks and the R.A.F. loses its smallest ornament.

Meanwhile I work away at the boats, and find myself everlastingly putting up suggestions for new devices or improvements. I forget I'm going out, whenever there is anything to do.

When the Junior Air Commodore becomes the Senior Air Marshal, I hope he will allow me to whisper into his civil ear half a hundred things that need doing. The Force will be ripe for reformation, then.

I am so glad you have reached Air Rank. It is almost the top of the tree. Next letter of congratulation will hail Sir S. and Lady Smith, upon their joint transfiguration.

Finances, allowances, everything will now be easier? and commodoring is usually only a brief act before the baton comes.

Excellent as I first said. Excellent.

T. E. S.

A sad week, this : The *Biscuit*, of tender memory, has journeyed to Felixstowe. Her new owner is F/Lt. Barlow. I hope he will be kind to her. She ran like a race-horse last time I drove her, in November. Leaving here is a preliminary training for the wrench next month when I lose the Service too. A bad year, 1935, for me. I hope it will go on being fine for you, at any rate.

His letters grew fewer : we were really separated now. What happened to him? He finished his power-boat work and left the Service early in 1935,

Bridlington having been his last station. He went to live at Clouds Hill as he had always planned, and tried to settle down to a life of unlimited leisure : but obviously he was restless, ill at ease, without his work and the regular life and companionship of the R.A.F. He felt himself in some intangible way that he had finished and was up against a blank wall of finality : it was this " blank " that he had so often discussed with me at Mount Batten, and it worried him always. I can remember so vividly how, the first time he ever said it : " After I leave the Air Force, life is a blank," and the look of striving that came to his face—striving to see further and further into a future that he longed to be able to control, but could not.

## XXXIV

THIRTEENTH MAY, 1935, and Squeak's birthday. The telephone rang: Sydney answered it. He came back into the room, and I knew he had bad news. It was Reuter's Agency, as usual, ringing him up to tell him of any news that had come through. This evening they reported that T. E. Shaw, otherwise the famous "Lawrence of Arabia," had had a terrible smash on his motor-bicycle and was hardly expected to live . . .

Noel Coward was staying with us at the time and did his best to help me through the next days. It was difficult to get news, but kind Philip Sassoon cabled us several times, as he knew we would be frantic to hear. I hoped obstinately to the end. Surely, if he could have gone through so many life-and-death adventures in Arabia, he would recover now.

At last the five days of long-drawn-out suspense were over. Noel and I stood, that evening, looking out over the aerodrome waiting for news. The telephone went. I answered it. Then I went back to Noel. "Tes has gone, Noel." My hopes had been unfounded; the end had come. Tes, riding fast along a Dorset lane, on his motor-bicycle, had

had to swerve to avoid two messenger boys on their bicycles ; crashed, and after five days' unconsciousness had slipped away. It was unbelievable, but it was true.

Noel was greatly distressed, as he had been sincerely fond of Tes, though he looked upon his death as a loss to literature even more than as a personal loss. To me, it was as if a support had been ruthlessly cut away from under me. But I knew that he had only gone to another plane of consciousness, and that we should meet again some day.

The world's tongues wagged. His accident and death were as unbelievable to strangers as they were to Sydney and myself, but in a different way. Sinister motives were hinted at.

But if there are any lingering doubts left still as to how or why he died, then I ask that any of you who harbour them shall turn back to the quotation from one of Tes's own letters, written in his Tank Corps days, that I have used in an earlier chapter. Having expressed his revulsion from all things animal—which he felt strongly at that time, and lost to a greater extent later—he describes the beautiful non-animal shell of Wells Cathedral and then says of the little girl playing like a “ tumbling daisy at its foot ” that he would sacrifice the whole structure to save her, although she was animal. His strongest impulse was to save life, and he lost his own in doing so. That is the true and only explanation of his sudden death.

THE GOLDEN REIGN

We had many very precious letters at this time, and one of the most sincere tributes to Tes came from Padre Mac—the Air Force's beloved Chaplain, Rev. A. A. McHardy :

ROYAL AIR FORCE,  
STANMORE,  
MIDDLESEX.

25.5.35.

DEAR SYDNEY,

Many thanks for your letter.

I was with Jerry Walsh the other day : he gave me great news of your happy Command.

The reason I am writing this little letter is that you, your wife and Squeak have been much in my best thoughts these last few days, on the passing from earthly fellowship & sight and hand of your great friend T. E. S. I seem to know in my heart what he is to you & you to him. I cannot think of that great soul as dead : I know he is serving still & rejoicing in his friends.

I shall never forget that day at Manston in your house when I had the privilege of meeting him. I think that it was in your home, where he always found the greatest peace & joy away from the distractions of the world, that he was happiest. What a wonderful inspiration for you all, for this generation had no greater servant ! I feel sure that having had such a precious friendship you will go on, never doubting, never fearing.

I am afraid this letter is badly expressed—I just

felt that I wanted to send to you all my sincerest thoughts at this sacred time.

Yours ever,

PADRE MAC.

Tes's favourite brother, Will, as a very young man wrote what could be made into an epitaph for his brother, while he was staying with him in Carchemish in 1914 :

“ I've talked with counsellors and lords  
Whose words were as no blunted swords,  
Watched two Emperors and five Kings  
And three who had men's worshippings,  
Ridden with horsemen of the East  
And sat with scholars at their feast.  
Known some the masters of their hours  
Some to whom years were as pressed flowers :  
Still, as I go this thought endures  
No place too great to be made yours.”

Or are Robert Graves's words in his *Lawrence and the Arabs* the truest because of being the most modest? “ The least and most that can be said about Lawrence is that he is a good man. This ‘ Good ’ is something that can be understood by a child or a savage or any simple-minded person.” This, I feel, he would prefer as his epitaph.

On their way home from China, Tes's mother and eldest brother, Bob, broke their journey to stay a few days in Singapore. I cannot write even now of my meeting with Mrs. Lawrence. We under-

stood each other from the first and were able to strengthen and comfort each other. I wrote a letter to wait for her on the ship. After she had read it and the boat sailed, she wrote to me in words I have treasured ever since :

“ The ship started almost as soon as we got on board, so I could not answer your lovely letter. I am so thankful you wrote like that, for it has comforted me greatly to know how much you valued my dear Ned. Thank you for all you were to him . . . ”





# INDEX

- Abdul Hamid II, 98  
 Abdulla, offered throne of Transjordan, 1  
 Air Council, 8  
 Air Ministry, 14, 15, 17, 20, 36, 55, 56, 57, 148, 160, 228, 229, 234, 236, 237  
 Allenby, Lord and Lady, 232  
 Amanullah, King, 17  
 Astor, Viscountess, 108, 109, 208, 209  
 Ataturk, Kemal, Lawrence's admiration for, 192  
  
 Baker, Sir Herbert, 24, 28, 30, 155, 156  
 Balbo, General, 62  
 Baldwin, Stanley, 10  
 Barnwell Castle, 97, 99  
 Bell, Gertrude, 1  
 Bentinck, Sir Rudolf, 20, 112  
 "Biffy" (Air Vice-Marshal A. E. Borton), 11, 96, 103, 192, 193  
*Biscuit*, the, presentation of, 61; 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 78, 80, 82, 85, 86, 87, 89, 91, 96, 98, 99, 105, 111, 112, 114, 119, 121, *et seq.*; re-covering her cushions, 127, 129, 130; 141, 143, 150, 152, 156, 157, 159, 169, 172, 174, 182, 185, 191, 195, 198, 204, 205, 206, 208, 210, 212, 215, 217, 241  
 Brand, Admiral Sir Hubert, 111, 112, 136  
 Buchan, John (the late Lord Tweedsmuir), 10  
  
 Cairo Conference, the (1921), 1, 4, 5  
 Cantelupe, Viscountess, 111  
 Carlow, Viscount, his friendship with Lawrence, 173; his printing of *Lawrence of Arabia*, 174; and of Lawrence's Syrian diary, 175; 212, 213  
 Cattewater, *see* Mount Batten  
 Churchill, Winston, and the Cairo Conference, 1, 4  
 Clouds Hill, 9, 10, 162, 168, 173, 176, 225, 229, 242  
 Clydesdale, Marquess of, resemblance to Lawrence, 39  
 Corvinus Press, 173  
 Coward, Noel, 102, 178, 179, 243

# INDEX

- Daily Mirror*, photographs  
Lawrence disembarking  
from the *Rajputana*, 26
- Ebrington, Viscountess, and  
the *Biscuit*, 123, *et seq.*
- Edward, Prince of Wales, his  
visit to the Scilly Isles, 222
- Elgar, Sir Edward, 191, 194
- Feisal, Emir, offered throne  
of Iraq, 1
- "Fisherman's Arms, The,"  
v, 15, 32, 51, 77, 79, 82, 92,  
165, 226
- Flete, 110
- Forster, E. M., 9
- Galpin, Mrs. "Pippin," 76,  
81
- Garnett, David, his *Letters of*  
*T. E. Lawrence*, 44
- Gloucester, Duke of, 123
- "Golden Reign, The," v, 4,  
174, 192, 229
- Graves, Robert, his *Lawrence*  
*and the Arabs*, 10, 39, 97, 146
- Hardy, Thomas, 9
- Hart, Captain Liddell, 34 ;  
his *Lawrence : the Artist in*  
*War and Letters*, 174
- Hussein, King, Lawrence's  
mission to him at Jidda, 4
- Iris III (flying-boat), 105 ;  
accident to, 133, *et seq.* ;  
1933 crash, 199
- Izzet Pasha, 98
- Jeffreys, General Sir George,  
111
- John, Augustus, R.A., 143
- Johnson, Amy, 147
- "Judgment of Paris, The,"  
118
- Karen*, 46, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65,  
125
- Kelly, Gerald, R.A., 195
- Kent, Duke of, 222
- Lawrence, Mrs., mother of  
T. E., Foreword by, v ;  
55, 149, 246
- Lawrence, T. E., author's  
meeting with, 2, *et seq.* ;  
description of, 2, 38, *et seq.* ;  
his dislike of limelight, 2,  
4, 108 ; his interest in fly-  
ing, 3, 7, 10, 25, 145 ; his  
age, 3, 145 ; his voice, 3 ;  
and the Arabs, 5, *et seq.* ;  
joins the R.A.F., 7, *et seq.* ;  
and the Press, 8, 20, 22, 23,  
25, *et seq.* ; 56, 62, 106 ;  
discharged from the R.A.F.,  
9 ; joins the Royal Tank  
Corps, 9, *et seq.* ; rejoins  
the R.A.F., 10 ; at Cran-  
well, 11 ; his genuine  
humility, 12 ; at Karachi,  
13 ; on the Afghan bor-  
der, 13 ; burned in effigy  
on Tower Hill, 17 ; his  
criticisms of the R.A.F.,  
18, 34, 234 ; his return to  
England, 20, *et seq.* ; at  
Mount Batten, 32, *et seq.* ;

# INDEX

- his love of music, 36, 73, 75 ; "The World's Imp," 41, 101, 151 ; his "complete purity of mind," 41 ; his "revolt from the flesh," 42, *et seq.* ; 95 ; his affection for the dogs, Leo and Banner, 43, 48, 97, 118, *et seq.* ; 144, 177, 214 ; his passion for speed, 45, 78, *et seq.* ; 130 ; his temporary fear of swimming, 46, 61 ; his office over the workshops, 47 ; his friendship with Squeak, 51, *et seq.* ; 71, 104, 128 ; his work on motor-boats, 55, 56, 140, 176, 177, 180, 184, 234, 237, 240 ; as personal clerk, 56, 107 ; his effect on others, 59, 99, 111 ; his attitude to games, 117 ; at Hythe, 140, 176, *et seq.* ; 187, *et seq.* ; his generosity, 151 ; visit to Manston, 162, *et seq.* ; his *Notes of the 200 Class*, 182, 183, 185 ; back at Mount Batten, 199, *et seq.* ; at Cowes, 211, *et seq.* ; at Southampton, 217, *et seq.* ; "dissolution of partnership," 230 ; retires from the R.A.F., 242 ; news of his death, 243, *et seq.*
- "Lido," the, 133, 134
- Max Gate (home of Thomas Hardy), 9
- Mint, The*, 8, 18
- Misconduct*, 65
- Mount Batten, v, vi, 14, 16, 25, 31, 34, 36, 46, 47, 49, 54, 59, 61, 65, 66, 72, 94, 95, 98, 103, 118, 142, 146, 149 ; departure from, 159, *et seq.* ; 166, 167, 184, 203, 242
- Mountbatten, Lady Louis, 237, *et seq.*
- Mount Edgumbe, visits to, 68, 115, 116, 123, 152, 159
- Mount Edgumbe, Countess, 68, 69, 70
- Mount Edgumbe, Earl of, 68, 116
- Odyssey, The*, Lawrence's translation of, 18, 32, 36, 44, 47, 95, 143, 154, 155, 156, 157, 189, 191, 192, 213, 216
- Orford, S. S., 64, 65
- Padre Mac (Rev. A. A. McHardy), on Lawrence's death, 245
- Pouces Farm, 163, 165, 175, 226, 227
- Rajputana, the*, Lawrence's return on, 18, *et seq.*
- Revolt in the Desert*, 5, 13, 19
- Riding, Laura, Lawrence's opinion of her poetry, 192
- Rogers, Bruce, Lawrence's American printer, 19, 156, 213, 215, 216

# INDEX

- Ross, John Hume, *see* Lawrence, T. E.
- Royal Tank Corps, 9, 10, 95, 145, 244
- Salmond, Sir Geoffrey, 1, 192, 205, 206, 209
- Salmond, Sir John, 206, 208, 209, 210
- Sassoon, Sir Philip, 102, 138, 202, 206, 208, 220, 223, 236, 237, 243
- Schneider Cup Air Race (1929), 14, 46, 54, 56, 60, *et seq.*; cancelled in 1930, 157; (1931), 157
- Segrave, Sir Henry, and the *Biscuit*, 60; his *White Cloud* at the Schneider Cup Race, 64
- Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, *The*, 5, 6; loss of MS., 11; cost of printing, 13; 59, 100, 160, 161, 210, 232
- Shaw, George Bernard, and Mrs., 9, 32, 109, 178, 179, 194
- Shaw, T. E., *see* Lawrence, T. E.
- Storrs, Sir Ronald, his *Lawrence: Himself*, 174
- "Tank town," 10, 43
- T. E. S. (or Tes), *see* Lawrence, T. E.
- Thurlestone, 117, 118, 157
- Trenchard, Lord, 1, 7, 13, 20, 26, 30, 56, 188, 234
- Versailles Conference, 5
- Waring, Lady Clementine, 173
- Will, brother of T. E. Lawrence, 55, 246

